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**Kaffir. Kangaroo.
Klondike.**

**TALES OF ~
The Gold Fields**

—BY—

THAD. W. H. LEAVITT.

**Author of "The Witch of Plum Hollow,"
Etc.**

R. H. C. BROWNE, Publisher, Toronto.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1899,
by Thad. W. H. Leavitt, at the Department of Agriculture.

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THE GOLDEN CASKET.

AN AFRICAN STORY.

Like thousands of other men, when I arrived at the Kimberley diamond mines I was too late. The era of individual mining for the gems had passed and the era of consolidation in full swing. Rhodes and Benarto and half a hundred lesser capitalists had seized upon the diamondiferous sand in which the gems were found and the poor man could only look on and wonder. A galvanized hut at a rental of three guineas a week was a luxury which I could ill afford and yet I lingered. There is a fascination about a spot in which fortunes are made in a single day which holds a man, though he does not participate in the dividends. Down at the Open Call Exchange I met Curtis and made his acquaintance, probably because I had nothing more profitable to do. Curtis told me his story the first night I invited him up to my den, where we discussed a bottle of bitter beer and a good cigar, the last which remained of a box which I had purchased at the Cape. His father was a Roumanian, his mother English. He had been educated in England and intended for the Church, but his career at Oxford had been cut short when his father discovered that he had not only been plucked, but had run in debt to the tune of two hundred pounds. The debts were paid and with one hundred in his pocket he had been shipped to South Africa with the parting injunction, "that it was an excellent colony in which a young man could carve out a fortune for himself."

Curtis had got as far as Kimberley, but had only succeeded in carving fifty pounds out of the original hundred. It was but the question of a few weeks when the carving process would be completed. Curtis was by no means brilliant and his knowledge of the world is best described as an unknown quantity,

Each evening we talked of the far north, from which came down daily rumors of new diamond fields, of fortunes made in ivory, of gold and all other precious metals. The very

air was full of rumors, the origin of which no man knew. They were born in Kaffir or Zulu brain and floated down the veldt as a drop of water floats in time to its home, the sea. Curtis never tired of relating the rumors and in the end I, an old prospector, became infected with the disease and listened half convinced. The result was that I drew three hundred pounds from the bank at the Cape and invested the last penny in an outfit, consisting of a wagon, bullocks, fire arms, provisions and trade and with Curtis and twelve Kaffirs set off for I knew not where. We were prepared to hunt, mine or prospect as circumstances favored.

The way was long and the pace slow, but six months later found us far beyond the beaten track and still we were heading north. Long before I should have turned back but for Curtis, as we had discovered nothing of value. Fortunately we had been able to conserve our supplies as game had been plentiful. When we departed Curtis was but a grown child. In six months he had developed into a man. But there are men and men and Curtis must be classed with the most remarkable which it has ever been my lot to meet and I have seen every continent on the globe.

We passed through sections of the country where a profitable trade in ivory could have been done with the natives and at last came upon a tract which bore unmistakeable signs of being gold-bearing and yet we did not halt as Curtis urged me forward into the great unknown. My commercial instincts and my common sense cried 'halt,' but such was the hold that the man had upon me that I was carried forward like a feather on the bosom of a swift running river. Curtis was no longer a great awkward boy, but a man in the full vigor of life. He had never been one hundred miles from home when he sailed for the Cape and yet we had not been three months out when I found myself deferring to his judgment, and with good cause. In the most critical situations in which we found ourselves placed, and they were many, his tact and discretion were invaluable. The air of the vast plains had done much for him physically, but the mental change bordered upon the marvellous and yet it was so gradual that for a time I only half gave him credit for it. It was only when all was over that I realized that it must have set in immediately after we left Kimberley and developed until it finally culminated in facts which I have never been able to explain, leaving them to readers who have made a study of mental phenomena.

We had camped in a valley to rest our bullocks and were sitting in our tent one morning when Curtis said, "I have

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something to tell you which may astonish you and which I cannot account for. It has been on my mind for some time, but I have refrained from mentioning it lest you should think that I am losing my senses. In fact, at first, I was alarmed but now that I have become accustomed to it I have no fears on that score."

"Is it possible that you are getting the fever?" I asked.

"The breakfast which I have just eaten should be the answer to such a question," was his reply.

"What is it?" I queried.

"On my word of honor I don't know and that is the reason I am going to make a clean breast of the whole affair."

"Proceed with the confession." Then I lit my pipe and leaned back against the tent pole.

"First, am I the same man that left Kimberley with you?"

"Certainly not, you have improved wonderfully, the air of the veldt agrees with you remarkably well and I am convinced that your own father would scarcely recognize you."

"Thanks. You agree with me on one point and that proves that I am sane or that we are both insane."

"Then you have noticed the change yourself?"

"Been cognizant of it from the first."

"How do you account for it?"

"It began here," he said, tapping his forehead.

Could it be possible that I had been for months the constant companion of a lunatic? The idea was absurd and yet when I come to think of it I had read of such things, but only in romance, and life in the interior of Africa if far removed from a romance, as we both well knew.

"We had not been out three weeks," Curtis continued, "when I lay down at night I could not sleep and yet I felt no discomfort, on the contrary, I was perfectly content. I can only describe my sensations as drifting away from myself. I saw nothing strange, I heard no voices or sounds and yet there were hours when I felt that I was not in the tent with you but hundreds and hundreds of miles away up north beyond where we are at the present time."

"You must have been dreaming."

"No, I possessed in a dim way a double consciousness. I realized that I was in the tent and yet I was not there."

"Nonsense," I exclaimed.

"Listen, After a time ideas came to me in flashes. I can describe it in no other language. I saw things as I had never seen them before as Curtis. All the foolish things in my life at Oxford stood out in bold relief, but that was not all. When I got up the following morning I was changed.

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was prepared to grapple with and overcome difficulties of which I could not possibly have had any knowledge as Curtis."

"Is it possible that you entertain doubts as to your being Curtis?" I asked.

"We will discuss that point a little later on. Let me proceed. The light or the ideas or the knowledge came. The very fact that you consented to go forward into the north country at my suggestion proves that the change had its effect upon you, does it not?"

"Perhaps so, but how was I to know that you were seeing visions and being led away by some will-o-the-wisp?"

"Have patience, let us reason the matter out like men and not like children. I am impelled by an irresistible desire to go forward. You ask me where and for what purpose? I do not know and yet I tell you that it is not in the hope of securing treasure, though that may follow. I am drawn by a power which is all powerful and which I would not resist, if I could. If you were to decide to turn back to-morrow, which you will not, I should go forward just the same. The light of my purpose is not breaking, I am as much in the dark as you and yet I am conscious that it is only a question of time when all will be revealed and made as plain as the sun at noon-day. Now that I have made it as clear to you as it is to myself, what do you think of the problem?"

"You are laboring under an hallucination," I answered.

"That is simply no answer, but a play on words."

"I certainly do not believe that you are insane."

"That is comforting as far as it goes, but have you no remote idea of the cause or the power which is at work upon me?"

"I deny that there is any cause or power."

"Illogical. You are confronted by certain facts and because you cannot account for them you deny their existence. Such a course would answer very well in the middle ages, but that time has gone by and it will never return. For myself I am convinced that the phenomena are capable of explanation by natural laws and quite in consonance with my mental make up; the difficulty is that we do not understand the laws. I am possessed of an impression, mind you only an impression, that it is quite possible and probable that at some past time I lived in the interior of Africa. This will strike you as absurd, it did me when I first thought of it, but I ask is it not a probability? It may have been only one hundred years ago, it may have been ten thousand, time is no factor in such a problem. For the sake of argument

let us say that I lived for a time in the interior. If so it follows that like all other men I must have had my likes and my dislikes, my loves and my hates, my ambitions and my disappointments. What more natural than that finding myself on this earth once more, and not only on the earth but in Africa, that there should return to me a dim remembrance of my past life? Is that remembrance the invisible cord which is drawing me? I am pulling you along contrary to your preconceived opinions. I have asked the question, can you furnish a more reasonable explanation? If not let it rest there and when the light comes rest assured you shall at once be taken into my confidence."

Curtis paused and looked me fully in the eyes. My protest, which I had coined, died on my lips and though I would not confess it I knew that I would go forward with him to the end. We let the subject drop nor was it referred to again for several weeks. The direction in which we started was north-east, the altitude of the country increased and we found ourselves in a temperate climate similar to that of the south of France. For days we had been gradually climbing, finally we arrived at the height of land and a panorama opened before us which I shall never forget. Below and far away stretched an immense valley in which lay a beautiful lake out of which ran a river to the north. The country alternated with patches of forest, appearing in the distance like green carpets, and plains of open land, brown and dotted with shrubs and clumps of trees.

"What a beautiful land!" burst from my lips. I turned to Curtis, he was deadlly pale and I saw laboring under intense excitement.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

In vain he attempted to reply, but not a word fell from his lips. His gaze swept over the valley and his face looked like that of a man vainly attempting to recall a well-known but forgotten word. So intense was the effort that the sweat stood out in great beads on his forehead. Immediately I recalled our conversation on the night when he propounded his remarkable theory of having before lived in Africa. A full minute must have elapsed and then came a sudden change, the mists of doubt cleared away and in their place reigned conviction and steadfast certainty.

"I have it," he said in a triumphant tone. "I have it at last and there can be no doubt. I am as certain as that I am here."

"What?" I enquired.

"In this valley I once lived, but it was so long, long ago

or. If so it was that at first it was like a half forgotten dream. Now it is as clear as the sun shining over our heads."

"You are dreaming," I replied.

"Dreaming, yes, and a pleasant dream, one which I shall never forget. What a change since my time and yet it is the same save that the city and villages have disappeared, but the river is the same and the lake, only it has grown much smaller. Where I shot my canoe, as a boy, now is dry land and great trees and yet how familiar is each sweep of the hills and the blue tops of the mountains, only hills and mountains have lost a trifle of their sharp outlines but that is all."

The idea was so absurd to my mind that I did not reply. We descended into the valley and established our camp on the bank of the lake, but a short distance from the point where the river emerged.

"I want a day or two to look about my old home," Curtis said, "and then I will tell you what conclusions I have arrived at."

I concluded that it was best, under the circumstances, to humor him and assented to the proposition. For two days I saw but little of my companion, save in the evenings when he came in worn out with his explorations. As he did not refer to his hallucination I concluded that it was wearing off and he would be in his normal sense again in a few days. I knew that he was not shamming and that he firmly believed that at some time in the past he had lived in the valley, but as he could not offer the slightest proof in support of his theory I could only trust to time to remove the baseless impression.

The second evening I was startled out of my complaisant mood by Curtis saying:

"Now that I have carefully gone over the ground every doubt has disappeared. I felt certain from the first, now I know."

"What do you know?"

"I know that I was born in this valley, that I lived here, grew to be a man and that here I died. Only one mystery remains to be solved and that is, what is the power which impelled me to return? On that point my mind is a blank, but the power is here and in time all will be made plain, so plain that even you will be compelled to acknowledge that I am right. There is nothing supernatural about the business, it's a common every-day occurrence, the mysterious part consists in our not being familiar with it. This is due to our lack of analysis. When we are confronted with facts

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which we do not understand we thrust them to one side instead of investigating them. In my case this course will be possible, for I must go to the bottom of it and then you will be driven to acknowledge that I have been guided by a power to which you deny existence."

To humor him I said, "What will be your next step?"

"I must wait but in the meantime I want you to come out with me to-morrow and I will furnish you with proof that I have been here before and that I know this valley as accurately and thoroughly as you know the place where you were born and raised, only you must bear in mind that it is probable that thousands of years have gone by since I last set foot here."

It was utterly useless to argue with a man who thus addressed you and whom you were convinced was honest.

"To-morrow, then," I said, "we start out. Now for a pipe and then we will turn in for the night."

The following morning Curtis said, "It will be necessary for us to carry a pick and shovel with us to test the truth of your statements." Thus provided we sallied forth.

"When I lived here," my companion remarked, "there was a stone pier which ran out into the lake opposite that point. It is not probable that time has wholly obliterated such a structure. The lake has filled up for a long distance with the debris which has washed down into the valley and we will have to try near the original shore. Before we strike a blow I will state that I well remember that along the pebbly stones there was cut in intaglio representations of crocodiles, for what purpose I do not know but probably the idea came originally from Egypt, the mother of civilization in the east. Let us begin at this point."

We began work and had not dug in a trench ten minutes when the pick which I was handling struck a rock, though the place was in exceedingly soft ground owing to its low lying position. Curtis cleared away the dirt, there was in plain sight a rough hewn stone. Half an hour later we had uncovered the stone to its edge and dusted it off. On my hands and knees I traced out the outline of an enormous crocodile as Curtis had described it.

"What have you to say in answer to that?" he asked, pointing to the stone.

"That you must have been here before, but when it was I have no means of knowing."

"That is that I may have been here as Curtis said and have forgotten it?" he continued.

"Yes. I do not accuse you of attempting to deceive me,

but that is the only reasonable explanation which I can offer."

"I assure you on my honor that I was never out of England as Curtis until I sailed for the Cape two months before I met you in Kimberley."

I am not doubting your honesty, but your sanity," "I answered.

"I certainly do not blame you, under the circumstances, but I ask you to wait for further proofs before you arrive at final conclusions."

"That is but fair?"

"Let us go up on the hillside," he remarked, shouldering the pick and shovel.

We climbed the hill, which was a gradual slope, until we were fully half a mile distant from the pier. Curtis came to a halt and looked about him as if measuring the distance with his eye.

"This is more difficult than the first test," he said, "but it is only a question of time when we shall find that for which I am searching. I was killed in a great battle that was fought hereabouts."

The look which spread over my face was a mirror of my thoughts. Curtis burst into a laugh so hearty and natural that I too caught the infection and joined.

"It is, I confess, a novelty for a man to be pointing out his own grave but novelties are none the less truths. The battle having been fought here it is only natural that we should look for relics. The dead must have been buried near by, or what is more probable left on the field, for I distinctly remember that before I was cut down the battle had gone against us in favor of the blacks, who outnumbered us ten to one. I was one of the few remaining who rallied around the standard of our King."

"Then you were not a black man previous to your becoming Curtis?" I said, for I was rapidly becoming accustomed to the strange circumstances by which I was surrounded.

"We were an olive skinned race, very beautiful, much more so than the present Europeans, to my way of thinking. Probably we were in the same plane of civilization as Cortez found the natives of Mexico. Now for the proof."

He threw off his coat and began digging with a will. I too joined and continued until it was time for tiffin, when we adjourned to the tent. I had recovered my spirits, for I saw, let the outcome be what it may, Curtis was perfectly sane upon every other subject and it must be confessed that

which I can see the discovery of the pier had somewhat shaken my faith in my own conclusions.

It was nearing night when we came upon a great mass of human bones, heaped in a pile and entangled in such a way that it was evident they had died in a hand to hand conflict. If further proofs were wanting it was given by an abundance of spear heads made of some metal closely resembling brass in color but evidently, at one time, capable of bearing a keen edge. I took up one of the spear heads and placed it in my pocket.

"We had a royal time that day," Curtis remarked.

"And you were killed?"

"Yes, in the hot of it."

"How does it feel to die?"

"A big black fellow thrust a spear into my breast, a sharp pang which lasted only an instant and then all was over. I have suffered ten fold more with the tooth ache in a minute."

As we walked back to the tent I turned to my companion and asked, "How is all this to end?"

"I am yet in the dark but the light will break and then we shall know why I was led back to this place. There is a vague something which I cannot explain and that something is the all-compelling motive or force. It transcends these minor details as the sun overshadows a rush light. I am standing upon the verge of the crater of an extinct volcano, into it I will plunge and then all will be as clear to you as to me. I can only wait. It is around and about me. It is in the air, in the whisperings of the leaves, in the songs of the birds, in the running water, in the moonbeams as they play over the lake and yet it is not given me to grasp it. I have but to put out my hand to touch it and is centuries off. I feel and know it and yet I cannot name it."

We rested the next day and the one following we renewed our explorations.

"Now for the city," Curtis said as we left the tent.

"What city."

"The city in which I was born."

"We have a long way to travel to find a city in these wilds," I answered,

Curtis took up the pick and shovel, paying no heed to my remark. We followed the course of the river for a mile and reached a chain of hills which ran at right angles with the stream. There my friend halted, then said, "The blacks must have burned it, for I see not a trace. Time has completed the work of destruction but we shall find the ruins, for

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The principal buildings were of stone and only one story in height, as I well remember. The temples and the palaces of the princes and the kings were the only exceptions. It comes back to me that it was the law of the land that no man, prince and king could build a house beyond a certain height. You see that even in those days the privileged clung passionately to some symbol of rank."

"Where is your buried city?" I inquired.

"Here," he answered, striking the pick into ground.

"Shall we dig at this point?"

"No, let us try and find the ruins of the palace or better of temple."

We carefully examined the ground as we proceeded and finally came to a place where a great mound covered the space of half an acre. Grass and shrubs and a few large trees grew upon the spot. Curtis walked slowly around the mound and at last said, "If I am not mistaken we are upon the site of the temple of the single eye. Let us begin." The first stroke of the pick revealed the edge of an enormous block of black marble. We dug around it for it was impossible for us to lift it. When the earth had been cleared away, there in the sunlight was a single eye cut in the marble, as clear and distinct as if the sculptor had but yesterday completed his work. There was no longer room for doubt. Whether Curtis had or had not been born in the valley long, long ago or was guided by some power unknown to my philosophy, I was compelled to confess that he knew the place and its every peculiarity. It was useless for me to attempt to solve the mystery, that remained for men more skilled in the subtleties of the human mind. I was an unwilling convert but at last I was a convert and nothing which might subsequently happen could shake my faith. Curtis flung down the pick and sat down on the grass opposite to the marble eye, gazing intently at it as one fascinated. Minute by minute went slowly by, I spoke not a word. So still was he that I fancied I could hear the man's heart beat. Could it be that he was drinking in some message from the buried past? Was it possible that the emblem on the black marble would awaken a train of thoughts which would open again the springs of memory? Was he to see the past, if it ever existed save in imagination, clear and undimmed by the lapse of years, it might be centuries? As I waited and watched there came to me a dim consciousness of the infinity of time and my utter unfitness to solve the mysteries which encompass the human soul.

"Quick! Quick!" he shouted as he suddenly sprang to

his feet and began digging as if his life depended upon his progress. Half an hour before, under the same circumstances, I should have believed him mad but in that half hour a wonderful change had been wrought in me. It may be that I too had been hypnotized by the marble eye. It may be that my views of life had broadened and deepened and that I caught faint glimpses of the possibilities of existence. Curtis had but to speak and I sprang to his assistance. There under the hot African sun we dug and delved with the frenzy of mad men, and I have since thought with the strength of more than mortals. We had struck upon a passage which ran down into the earth, it was a flight of steps, but blocked with stones and fallen rubbish. At the foot of the steps we came to a vaulted passage, dark at the other end as midnight.

"We must have a light," Curtis exclaimed.

He hurried out, gathered grass and twigs and fallen limbs, piled them in a heap at the foot of the staircase and set them ablaze. Then we saw, twenty feet distant, a marble slab which completely blocked the way. That it had been fashioned as a door I did not doubt. Curtis attacked it with the pick but his efforts were as futile as if he had attempted to hew down Mount Owen Stanley with the same utensil. Thus foiled he threw down the pick and passed his hand hurriedly over his eyes.

"Fool," he muttered. "Hold me up on your shoulder."

I did so. What he did I do not know. I saw him groping with his hands nervously along the wall. As he dropped to the floor the huge stone began slowly to slide from right to left into a groove in the wall and in a minute the way was clear. Curtis rushed in and disappeared, but caution had always been my strong point. I went out and brought in a great stone and placed it so that the door could not roll back. Doors that roll so easily out of the way are doubly liable to roll back again quite unexpectedly. The light shone into a chamber, it could not have been more than ten feet square and of the same height. Curtis was standing with his arms folded across his breast. I entered and saw resting on two marble blocks, but a little way from the floor, a dull yellow, metal cylinder some six feet long and eighteen inches in diameter.

"What is it?" I asked.

"The influence which brought me here."

"What does it contain?"

"I do not know."

"Let us have it out into the light," I said, and stooping

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own I took hold of one end, Curtis bearing the other. 1.
as in advance and consequently could not see my burden
then we emerged into the light. We carried it under a great
ree and laid it down carefully. Then I turned around and
my heart jumped into my mouth.

"Gold, gold," I shouted. The spirit of the miner was up-
on me instantly. There could be no doubt, it was gold,
though it weighed much less than I would have reckoned,
judging from its size.

"I'm right glad that we have found what attracted you,"
said laughing. "May you continue to be attracted in the
same way. I pledge myself never again to doubt your
fidelity. The man that can smell a gold cylinder all the way
from here to Kimberley is the man for a partner."

To my outburst Curtis answered not a word, but stood
with folded hands on his breast. I doubt whether he heard
a word of what I said. Then I began to examine our prize,
for in that light only did I consider it. It was evidently pure
gold which had been beaten out into one immense sheet,
then rolled up into a cylinder, the ends cut into triangular
form and brought together at a common centre and soldered,
thus making an air tight compartment. The work had been
done with the greatest care and nicety and yet the tools em-
ployed could have been only hammers for the marks of the
hammer face was clearly to be seen. When I touched the
cylinder with the point of my finger it yielded thus proving
that it was extremely thin.

"What a pity they did not make it an inch thick? I re-
marked. I would have had it out of there if it had weighed
a ton."

Receiving no answer I turned and saw that Curtis had
gone back and was again seated in front of the single marble
slab and wrapped in contemplation. Perhaps he met with
such success that he is waiting for the influence to direct
him to another and another. He has my prayers for his suc-
cess. I waited a few minutes but as he gave no sign I ap-
proached him and said, "I am burning with impatience to
ascertain what the cylinder contains. Shall I cut it open
with my knife? It is pure gold and therefore very soft."

Curtis followed me back to the cylinder and standing by
said: "Cut."

I inserted my knife at one end and ran it the full length of
the cylinder and then cut transversely across each end. I
turned back the sides and saw a thin film of gold, so light
that the air stirred it, covering something beneath. Instant-
ly all my levity died away on my lips and I stepped back

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wanting in courage to lift the veil. Curtis sank down on his knees and drew it gently back. An involuntary cry of admiration burst from his lips, then I grew silent as the grave. A light breeze caught the filliament of gold and it floated away in the sunlight.

In the cylinder lay the most beautiful woman I had ever looked upon. She was of less than medium height, with creamy olive complexion, Her hair was of a golden red which hung in great masses over a low, broad forehead. The eyes were of liquid blue and half open. Around her firm, full mouth lingered a smile. The lips were cherry red and I noticed that her small ears were exquisitely shaped and that the sunlight falling upon one of them shone through it turning it into the pink seen in the sea shell.

"Inta! Inta!" whispered Curtis in a tone so low that it scarce reached me though I was standing by his side.

"My Inta." He bent over and kissed her full on the lips. As he did so there was a swish in the air as if cloven by the wing of an eagle, then all was still.

I was gazing intently at the vision of loveliness when instantly she shivered like an aspen leaf and then dissolved into a mere handful of impalpable grey powder. Whether it was the action of the atmosphere upon the body so long sealed in an air tight compartment or the effect of the kiss I do not know but so sudden was the change that I doubted my own senses for an instant.

Curtis rose from his knees and carefully gathered the grey powder which lay scattered over the bottom of the cylinder, flicking it into a little heap with his handkerchief. When he had it collected he placed it all in the palm of one hand and said, "Come."

We made our way to the river side where he cast the powder out upon the water, then turned and went back to the cylinder.

"All is over now," he said in the most matter of fact way. "When shall we start on our return trip to the coast?"

"In the morning," I answered, but what are we to do with this? pointing to the cylinder.

"It is your reward for the faith you had in me."

"Share and share alike is the miner's rule," I answered.

"Not in this instance, not for worlds would I take a penny derived from the sale of the casket, but it has been given to you and by right well won."

As we journeyed back toward the coast I waited for Curtis to offer some explanation of the strange circumstances, but he spoke not a word. He was in the best of spirits and en-

livened the journey with song and anecdotes. Much I wondered from whence they came, for though disguised it was plain that they principally related to his own experience in the past. When we left Kimberley I looked upon him as a callow youth, now I realized that he was a man among great men and destined to make his mark. On our return, by a happy stroke of his genius, we succeeded in disposing of all our trade with a native chief for ivory tusks which loaded down our wagon to its full capacity. We did not return to Kimberley, but struck the coast, where the ivory was sold. After taking out my three hundred pounds the balance was divided. The gold in the cylinder realized nearly twelve hundred pounds so that the trip with my strange partner was highly profitable to me. Curtis had engaged passage for England and the night before he sailed he said:

"It is but fair to you that I should offer some explanation of the remarkable circumstances which marked our finding of the casket. Up to the time of finding the cylinder I was in the dark relative to the influence which had drawn me into the wilderness. Not till that moment did I realize why I had gone back to the place of my birth and what is still more remarkable is the fact that the one great epoch in my former life had not been recalled. My mind was a complete blank upon the supreme passion of my life. Why this should have been I cannot offer any explanation, though it appears incomprehensible. We can but accept it as a fact and trust that future investigations on this subject, too long neglected, will elucidate the mystery.

"My family had ever been a race of warriors and stood high in the confidence of the king. Our tribe was the only one in that part of Africa which was not dark skinned. There were legends that in the past we had come from a rainless land but these traditions were lost in the dim past. For centuries we had been the objects of hatred to our black neighbors who never tired in making war upon us. Owing to our superior knowledge and bravery we not only held our own but extended our territory far beyond the confines of the beautiful valley which you saw. Though I was a trusted warrior I was not a noble and it was a law from time immemorial that the princely class could only marry with their equals in rank. The most powerful noble, ranking next to the king, possessed a single child, a daughter, Inta. When I was twenty-five years of age and had risen to the rank of captain of five hundred men I saw Inta for the first time, for my life had been spent on the frontier guarding and defending it. My passion for the girl knew no bounds and it was

much I wonder reciprocated with equal ardour. We knew that we could not marry, but despite laws and precedents we met in secret and fed the mutual flame which was consuming us. There could be but one end and it came in my bribing a priest to join us as man and wife. Ten days later I was ordered to my post to repel an invasion. Our parting was most bitter. Soon after my departure the priest who had performed the ceremony took sick and on his death-bed confessed all. Inta was seized by the ecclesiastics and taken to the great temple, for the sentence was death. An order was issued by the king that I be seized, and hurried to the city where torture and my life would pay the forfeit. A friend sent me the tidings of the edict, but the officers never reached me, for a great army of blacks suddenly hurled themselves upon the frontier and drove us back to the capital where the decisive battle was fought which ended in our extermination and my death. From the hour Inta was seized to the moment I fell on the spear of the black savage I never heard a word from my wife, the woman who loved me as no other woman ever loved. Her gentle spirit drew me to Africa and then back to her last resting place. Of that I am as certain as that I now exist. It came down to me over the plains and the rivers and the forests and touched the old cord which had vibrated with such intensity centuries and centuries ago. In life she had been the one being I had loved and not only loved but worshipped. Once again she was to be my light and guiding star. When I kissed her in her narrow bed where she had lain for all that time, there came from her to me a message which is our secret. The message was borne of wings of love from I know not where. It thrilled my every fibre. It burned into my soul. It will abide with me so long as atom shall be. It was of her, now it is myself. One thing it may tell you. Love never dies. Men may die, mountains may crumble, world's decay and disappear, but love remains. That is the great secret of the universe."

Curtis shook me cordially by the hand. I have never seen him since. He lives in England to-day and his name is known wherever the English tongue is spoken. My readers know him as one of the giants of the day. They have but to think and they can guess his name.

One more thought and I have finished. Was his genius breathed into him when he kissed her lying in the gold casket in the wilds of Africa?

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THE BLACK CAT OF KLONDIKE.

In the winter of 1896 I was attending the Osgoode Hall Law School, Toronto, and drawing wills, deeds and mortgages for a firm of barristers on a salary of five dollars per week. I was young and ambitious and dreamed that it was only a question of time when I should become, if not a judge, at least a leading barrister. At a conversat, given by the Law Society, I met my fate and fell in love with Edith Hawthaway. The passion was reciprocated and a few weeks later we were engaged. When the marriage would take place was delightfully nebulous as was my legal status. We had decided that it was to be and that was all-sufficient. One caution we exercised and but one, it was, we kept the engagement a secret. Edith's father was a broker living in a fine residence on fashionable St. George Street, and reputed to be in very comfortable circumstances. Possibly he might object to the betrothal of his only child to an impecunious law student, who had only passed his first exam. and was by no means certain of passing the next one. So we drifted pleasantly with the tide and cherished our secret with infinite satisfaction. One Saturday afternoon I received a hurried note from Edith asking me to call that evening. Instinctively I felt that our mutual happiness was threatened. I was busy engrossing a mortgage at the time and unconsciously made all the sums payable to Edith Hawthaway, instead of Isaac Lazerus.

I found Edith in tears. "We must part," she cried, "all is over."

"No, no," I said, "it cannot be."

"I was so happy, and now the cruelty of fate."

"Calm yourself and tell me all. We shall never part, come what may."

"We are ruined," she sobbed. "My father, my poor father risked everything in Chicago and he has lost. Home, money, everything must go and yet there will remain a debt

of honor for twenty thousand dollars. This money was entrusted to him by a widow, it was her all. The shock was more than he could bear, he has had a paralytic stroke and the doctors say he will never recover. He may live for years but will be helpless. Mother, as you know, is an invalid and, and, she paused and wiped away her tears. How can I tell you? but I must, only yesterday Fred Reingold asked me to be his wife. He knows all and yet he declares that I will consent, the old home shall be saved and the debt of honor paid. What am I to do? In one year we shall be turned into the street. Mother has a few hundred dollars we can subsist upon it for a year by discharging all the servants and living with the greatest economy. Then will come the poor-house for father and mother, and for me God only knows."

"Some way will open," I murmured.

"What way?"

I was silent.

"I have made up my mind," Edith said, shuddering. "There is but one way for escape, we must bury our love. I must be sacrificed."

"No," I protested. "You do not, you cannot love me."

Edith turned deadly pale and gave me one look. The cruel words died on my lips. Then we sat and brooded. Edith sprang to her feet and exclaimed, "I have it, the only chance."

There was a ring in her voice from which hope was bred.

"Tell me, name it," I cried.

"You will have to consent," she said slowly, as if weighing every word.

"Then I consent."

"It is an inspiration," she continued, I will tell Fred Reingold that I will marry him one year from to-morrow, provided the twenty thousand dollars is not paid by that time. You will have one year in which to make a fortune."

"But will he consent to such terms?"

"Yes, if he loves me."

My hopes sank to zero, then froze.

"I have not finished," Edith said, she had divined my thoughts, "they have found great gold fields on the Yukon it is a frightful country on the confines of Alaska. You must go there and find a fortune and be back in time."

"But how?" I asked.

"That shall be a secret until you come back. I will see Fred Reingold to-morrow and to-morrow night you shall know your fate."

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The following evening she met me at the door and smiled. "It is all arranged," she said. "The year has been granted, you are to go."

"When?"

"To-morrow morning on the first train."

"But,"—I never finished the sentence.

"Every hour means success or failure," Edith exclaimed reproachfully.

How that evening fled away we only realized.

When I kissed her good-bye she slipped three crisp one-hundred-dollar bills into my hand. Then she whispered, "Remember this is St. Patrick's day, March the 17th, and the time will expire at twelve o'clock at night, one year from today. I must give you something to bring you good luck, what shall it be?"

"That which you love the best, next to me."

She glanced around the room, at her feet on a white rug lay a small black kitten. "There he is," she said, pointing to the kitten, "my second love."

I picked the kitten up, inspired by a sudden impulse. "He shall keep me company." I put him in my coat pocket and half an hour later I was packing my scanty wardrobe. Six days later I was standing on the quay at Vancouver, making inquiries for transportation to the Yukon gold fields. The man to whom I addressed the question was a rough, curly fellow, none too clean, with a heavy beard covering his face up to the eyes.

His answer was, "What are you going to the Yukon for?"

"To mine gold."

"Ha! ha! ha! Jim," to another man who was loading some packages into a yawl, "Jim, come here, do you see this spindle," pointing to me. "Here's a new chum who wants to go to the Yukon and hunt for gold. Look at him, see them legs and hands. Ha! ha!"

"Only another tenderfoot gone mad," was Jim's reply as he walked away.

"I'm going to the Yukon," I said decidedly.

"Right you are my boy. You may start but you'll never come back. I've seen plenty of new chums on Bendigo and Jackendandah, they always talk big on the go-in, and cry when they come out. What's that you've got in your pocket?"

"A kitten."

"Is the kitten on the rush too?"

"He goes with me."

"Bless my eyes, Jim, this slim has got a kitten going with him to the Klondike."

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"No fear of them ever getting there," Jim responded.

"Boy, take my advice and go home to your mother," the man said in a kind tone.

To be called a boy brought tears of vexation to my eyes. I turned to walk away.

"Hold on, you are determined to go?"

"Yes."

"Have you money to pay for your passage and an outfit?"

"Certainly."

"It will cost a hundred and fifty."

"I have it."

"Jim, the new chum has the dust, shall we take him?"

"We will bring the party up to an even dozen and reduce the expenses."

"You're Captain, do as you please, anyway the tenderfoot and the cat don't weigh more than a puff ball," Jim answered.

"My name is Simeon, Simeon of Ballarat and Bendigo and every creek. This way sharp if you mean business. See that schooner over there, we sail at four this afternoon.

For an hour we were busy securing my outfit and provisions. When all were on board we hoisted sail and were

I had only fifty dollars left and the kitten. The men were all experienced miners, some from Australia, the others from California, Nevada and Colorado.

When I took the kitten out of my pocket and fed him there was a roar of laughter and a fusillade of remarks. They named the kitten

Klondike and ere we reached Dyea he had become a universal pet and the mascot of the party. It would have made

Smith's heart glad to have seen the miners fondling Klondike. At Dyea we unloaded our supplies and hired the

Indians to pack them over Chilcoot Pass. At Lake Linderoth a boat was built in which we floated down the Yukon, I

could only make myself useful as cook, being totally unfitted for the hard work. Simeon counselled that we should not

descend to Dawson City, but turn off and ascend a tributary at a point estimated to be from one hundred to one hundred

and fifty miles from the city. The object aimed at was to discover a new field and locate the best claims. His advice

was taken. We made our way up the creek until our progress was stopped by a series of rapids, there we pitched our

camp. I was left in charge of the camp while prospecting parties went out in every direction. Gold was found in the

beds of most of the streams, but not in paying quantities. When the boat was hauled up the rapids with a rope, we

were to make a further advance into the interior. That night



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the boat broke loose, was swept over the rapids and totally destroyed. Two of the miners went down to the Yukon to ascertain if they could get some boat which was descending the river to transport our supplies to Dawson City. They failed, but brought back the news of the wonderful strike made on the Eldorado. Instantly all was confusion. The men became mad. The mines were one hundred miles away. Packs were made up the following morning, a cache was built, in which to store the provisions, and in twenty-four hours a start was made. The men each carried one hundred pounds of provisions in addition to a pick and shovel. Simeon assisted to make up my pack of fifty pounds. The heat, during the middle of the day, was intense, the air filled with insect pests. The route ran over mountains, through bogs, across streams. In places the moss was two feet in depth. With my load I plunged and fell and ran, for the men marched at a rapid pace. Not ten miles had been covered when I fell exhausted. Not even for the coveted fortune for Edith could I have gone another mile. I was at the rear of the line and would have been left unheeded but for the watchful care of Simeon, who came back and sat down by me.

"You can never go through," he said, "I knew that was madness for you to try. You have done much better than I thought you would. Miners on a rush would leave their best friends to perish. I have been through it before, I know what it means. If you would save your life go back to the cache. There is plenty of provisions, you cannot starve. Go to work and build a hut, dig a hole into the hillside so that the back and most of the sides will be of earth. Finish it with small logs, put on a roof of poles, cover them with moss, then with a layer of earth, then more moss and more earth, make it thick. About a foot distant from the walls of the hut build another row of logs and fill the space between with moss, taking care to pack it tightly then plaster the cracks with mud. Be certain and have a big fire place at the rear, make it of stone and the chimney of green logs standing on end. When you have these things done you will be safe, but not till then. I promise that I will come back for you, but it may not be until Spring. Here is my hand and John Simeon never breaks his word. Cheer up, we will probably have to return for provisions in a few weeks. Then you shall go through, even if I have to carry you on my back."

He gave me a hearty hand-shake, turned and was gone. I sank back on the moss and cried with a bitterness which

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shall never feel again. Then a great fear came upon me. For a moment I believe my heart ceased to beat. Could I find my way back? Every other question vanished. I struggled to my feet and turned back with an energy born of despair. Every few minutes I stopped and examined the foot-marks. The sun had gone down but the night only lasts, in that latitude, in summer, for one brief hour. I was without a watch and could only guess the time. At last I could proceed no further. I threw off my pack and released Klondike from the little wicker cage I had made to carry him in, and in ten minutes I was fast asleep. When I awoke the sun was up, but how long I slept I never knew. I built a fire, ate a hearty breakfast and started. In half an hour I came to a point where two trails crossed, which to take I did not know. I went forward on one, then turned back, took the other and again turned back. I was lost. Cold beads of sweat stood out on my body, my brain beat like a trip-hammer. As I stood thus at the parting of the ways my eye caught sight of a fluff of cotton wool on a branch not five yards distant. I had lined Klondike's basket with the material before leaving the camp. "Saved by Klondike!" I cried. So bewildered was I that I should have passed the cache had I not have been for the cat. He began to mew and try to get out of his basket. "Here we are at last," I cried. For four weeks I labored at the hut, a miner would have built it in four days. After three weeks I began to look for the return of my companions, but at the end of six weeks I abandoned all hopes. The cold gradually increased. I made everything tight and snug, then I determined to prospect the near-by creeks for gold. I found gold on every side but my best work did not exceed five dollars in a day. Klondike was my constant companion, he had grown strong and agile and roamed about the camp, at times going into the forest for hours. The cold came down over the mountains and drove me into the hut. I only ventured out to cut my supply of wood. I fell into a despondent mood, but for Klondike I believe that I should have gone mad. With infinite patience I taught him a variety of tricks and there were times when I talked to him of Edith and the happy days when he had nestled in her arms. In such hours I imagined I saw her spirit looking out of his eyes and bidding me be of good cheer. At night he crept into the fur-lined bag in which I slept and comforted me in the solitude with his purr. In January I noticed that every afternoon he wished to leave the cabin and remain outside for nearly an hour. As this continued day after day my curiosity was at last

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roused and I determined to watch him, which I did the following day. Leaving the hut he made his way diagonally up the hill-side and then disappeared. I resolved to ascertain the attraction. I struggled into the snow which was piled twenty feet deep and sank to my waist. Then I took a shovel and commenced to dig. My progress was exceedingly slow as I had to cut the snow down several feet before it would support me. Twenty feet per day was the best progress I could make. Klondike evidently believed that I was constructing the road for his convenience for when he daily returned from his mysterious visit he stopped and rubbed himself against my legs as if to encourage me in my good work. On the fourth day I had reached a point where I could see the hole in the snow in which he disappeared. It was on the top of a ledge of rock some ten feet wide. "To-morrow," I said, "I shall know the reason." That night I constructed a short ladder with which to surmount the difficulty. The following day I placed it against the ledge and climbed up. The crumbling snow, running down the bank, prevented me seeing what was before me. I pushed the snow away and looked in. At my very face was a skeleton hand holding a small black object in its bony fingers. I screamed with terror, the ladder lost its balance, the next instant I was twenty feet below on my back in the snow. I ran to the hut and actually barred the door, so great was my fright. What could it mean? I had read of demons appearing in the guise of black cats, a thousand grotesque fancies danced through my brain. Then I called Klondike, he was at my feet. He could not possibly be in the skeleton hand and also Klondike at the same time. Yet even that I imagined might be possible. You must bear in mind that for months I had lived isolated from human companionship, that my brain had become warped and my thoughts abnormal. Was the skeleton hand a warning? Should I abandon the quest and leave the mystery unsolved? Perhaps it was a portend of my fate. Thus I reasoned and surmised, conjured and imagined. My one consolation was that Klondike had crept into his accustomed place and was apparently sleeping the sleep of innocence, unmindful of the skeleton hand. When the sun came up over the mountains the next day my courage returned. I determined to probe the affair to the bottom. To prove that there was nothing supernatural about the cat, I took Klondike in my arms and made my way to the top of the ladder. The hand was there and the cat was there. He sprang from me and entered the opening, coming out again with a bone in his mouth, the

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fore-arm of a man. "Only the last resting place of some poor miner who has died in this wilderness," was my comment. Then, for the first, I noticed that the object in the grasp of the skeleton hand was a small book. I reached out and tried to remove it from the bony fingers. They held it in a death grasp and I was compelled to pick up the hand, which I carried to my cabin. I pried open the fingers and opened the book. The fly leaf was closely written over in a language which I was unable to read. The book, printed in a fine, small, black type, was equally unreadable. From the chapters and for other reasons I decided that it was a copy of the New Testament. I carefully wiped it and laid it away on a shelf. "To-morrow," I said, "I will close the opening, the stranger's bones shall rest in peace." The next day, provided with pick and shovel, I climbed the ledge and carefully removed the snow. Then I knelt down and looked in, the cavern was some three feet in height and eight in length. The small bones were strewn about, but the trunk remained prone upon the centre of the cavern. Suddenly something soft touched me on the face, I sprang back, lost my balance, and for the second time found myself on my back in the trench below. I scrambled to my feet and ran for the hut. Then I stopped and turned, Klondike was sitting complacently on the top of the ladder. "Now I will be a man," I said, and I walked back heartily ashamed of myself. I took my tormentor to the hut, fastened him in and returned. I resolved to replace all of the scattered bones and seal up the mouth of the cave. To do so I was compelled to crawl inside. In my task I chanced to move the trunk, the sun shot a beam of light within and reflected a dull, yellow glitter. There could be no mistake, it was gold. Then I paused, should I take it or bury it with the bones? It had been his in life why not in death? If Simeon did not return I too would be found some day, my bones bleaching beside my handful of yellow dust. No, I would leave it with its rightful owner. Carefully I gathered the bones, they were sacred to the memory of the unknown. Edith's love, hope and avarice, all were but memories, as long passed as if ages had gone by. Then it came upon me that a trust had been committed to my charge. The dying man had left a message, a sacred injunction written in God's Book. The handful of gold was to be sent to some loved one. Instantly all my sympathies were aroused. I had something to live for, to work for. I felt like a new man. I went back to the hut and brought with me a small tin dish in which to gather the last grain. I picked up the nuggets one by one. So intent was I that it

was not until the pannakin was half full that I noticed that the supply was by no means exhausted. I went for another and larger dish and another and another, and still more remained. Night came on and I was compelled to relinquish my task. The cabin had been transformed into a treasure house. A demon whispered in my ear, "You are rich. Edith and love and happiness are before you. Fool, you have but to reach out your hand and take the gold. Dead men tell no tales."

A violent trembling seized upon me. My resolution wavered, then my eye rested upon the little black book and a great calm fell upon me. "No," I said, "it is not mine, I will not be a thief." From that moment I was firm and I never doubted but that providence would rescue me from the Yukon. When I had removed all the treasure I closed the mouth of the cave, then I fashioned a rude cross and planted it firmly in the ground to mark the burial place. My next step was to make forty small bags out of heavy cloth into which I poured the gold, the bags I buried in the hut beneath my bed. The possession of the treasure brought a new fear, that of robbers, yet so far as I knew, there was not a man within one hundred miles of me. I frequently awoke in the night and listened intently, believing that I heard footsteps. One night I suddenly sprang to my feet, at the very door were snarling and fighting dogs, then followed a thump on the side of the hut.

"Hello! Hello! are you there!" came in a hoarse voice.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Open the door, new chum." It was Simeon.

I gave a shout, rushed out and fairly hugged him with joy and Jim too, who was unharnessing the dogs.

"And here's Klondike, grown as big as a tiger," Simeon cried, picking up the cat. "Have you any grub?"

"Plenty."

"Boil the billy and make tea. Is any of the brandy left?"

"I never touched it."

"The best news yet. Knock the neck off a bottle, Jim, brandy. Jim was in the hut in an instant. After justice had been more than done to the meal, Simeon after looking around said, "Well done for a boy. Had a long wait, eh?"

"I always thought you would come."

"Hear that Jim, no one doubts the old man's word. That's better than gold. I would have been back in a month, but we got word from a party who came down from this section that you had left and that the cache had been robbed. It

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must have been another camp. Had many visitors looking for food and stealing what you did not give?"

"I have not seen a man since we parted in the woods."

"Good heavens! why hundreds and hundreds have gone down the river and you did not know enough to make for the big stream, get taken on board and find yourself in Dawson City in two days."

"No."

"I told you Jim, that being a new chum he'd sit down as long as the grub held out."

"Did you mine any gold?"

"A little."

"Show it?"

I handed him the buckskin bag which held the gold I had mined.

"Twenty ounces, enough to take you home."

"How did you succeed?" I asked.

"Struck it rich, took out twenty-five thousand dollars worth, Jim twenty thousand, and the rest of the party about the same and we have only scratched over our claims. The rest is down at the city."

"When shall we make a start?" I asked.

"In the morning."

Then we turned in for sleep.

At an early hour Jim was busy loading the sleds with supplies. "I'm blessed if you have eaten as much as a canary bird," he remarked to me. "The boys will have to run up and bring down the rest."

I had purposely said nothing of my wonderful experience, waiting until I could tell Simeon privately, which I did showing him the skeleton hand and the black book in confirmation.

"I don't know where you picked up these things," he said, "but one thing is certain you are off your chump."

"But I have the gold."

"Where?"

"Buried there."

"Take the pick and dig it up."

"What do you say to that," I asked as I pulled out a bag, and that and that and that."

"Jim, we are a fine lot of duffers, come in, this new chum and the cat, mind you the cat, have beaten every man on the prairie and Eldorado."

Jim came in and stared, he could not speak, then he whispered, "How many has he got?"

"Only forty bags."

"But the gold is not mine," I said.

"Not yours, then whose is it?"

"The dead man's."

"And you will not keep it?"

"No, if the book contains a will."

"And you are a lawyer's clerk?"

"I could not keep it," I repeated firmly,

Simeon turned me around and around and then said, "I believe you, if you live you will make a man, you have got the timber in you, shake."

The gold was carried out and loaded on a sled while I put Klondike in a bag. We reached Dawson City and after some weeks delay secured a steamer for St. Michael's, from that point we sailed to Vancouver. At the latter place I ascertained that the value of the find was one hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars. The dust was deposited in the Bank of Montreal. Then Simeon and I went in quest of a man who could read the writing in the black book. At last an officer from a Russian man-of-war was found. He translated the message. Here is the translation:—

"My name is Vospar Plonvisky, I was born in Warsaw of noble Polish parents. The Russian authorities arrested me as a member of a secret society and banished me to Siberia. There I remained for twenty years. Again and again the black knot (cat in English) cut my flesh to the bone for trying to escape. Finally I made my way to sea in an open boat and reached Alaska. The accursed Russian was there. I was seized on suspicion and sent into the interior to look for mines with several officials. Our voyage was up a great river. One night I stole the boat, which was well supplied with provisions and firearms, and sailed away up the river. After several weeks I came to the rapids, where I abandoned the boat, then I packed my provisions into the interior, keeping to the west. My intention was to make my way to Canada, when I reached a small stream, near this spot I found a small stream the bed of which was yellow with gold. I resolved to gather a vast store, hide it and then proceed on my way. After I had collected the gold I hid it in the cave where my bones rest. Then my last sickness came upon me. I grew weaker day by day. I realize that I am dying, my last act is to write this and creep into the cave. I make a solemn vow, it is: 'If a Russian should find me and touch me or my gold, I swear by the memory of the black knout (cat) that I will return and curse him and his children and his children's children. To the man of any other nation the gold is a free gift.'"

I sold the gold to the bank and handed a cheque for five thousand dollars to Simeon.

"Not a cent," he said, "I have enough and to spare."

Then I gave him five hundred to hand to Jim. One week later I was in Toronto. It was Saturday night when I arrived. When the cab drew up at Edith's home I saw that the drawing room was a blaze of light. Then my heart sank, I had not had a word from her since I left on the quest. I felt that she had broken her promise to me and married Fred Reingold. With a trembling hand I rang the bell. I ignored the servant and walked in with Klondike in my arms. The next instant Edith was in my arms. Her first words were :

"Did you get any of the letters or telegrams?"

"Not one."

"Did you see the notices in the newspapers?"

"No, what notices?"

"Notices for you to come back. Father did not lose his fortune. It was a mistake in the telegram from Chicago, the margin was on the right side and all was explained when the broker wrote. Father nearly recovered and is very well."

"What of Fred Reingold?" I stammered.

"Married six months ago to Bessie Loudon,"

"I have got the gold," I said.

"And we don't want it," Edith answered.

In our library, under a glass case, stands the skeleton hand holding the Greek Testament. Now and then I point out this hand to the new baby whose name is Simeon.

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A MAORI LEGEND. A NEW ZEALAND STORY.

I spent a week in a pah down in the hot lake country, the King's land, New Zealand, a short time before the destruction of the Pink and White Terraces. One night as I lay in my thatched hut, with the boiling water singing and simmering on every side, an old Maori wise-man paid me a visit and told me the following story.

"A thousand moons ago my people came over the sea in great canoes from the islands. Then the Maori was like the white man of to-day, restless as the wind, ever roving to and fro from land to land. The canoes came ashore down at the coast and it was beside these lakes that the pahas were built because the fern root grew here in the warm, damp earth and the Great Spirit made the water boil. in which to cook it. Then our wise men said, 'Here is our home and this land was made for the Maori. Here shall be found that which we so long have sought.' All would have been well if our people had listened to these words. After a time there spread from ear to ear the story of a wonderful lake, hid away up in the mountains. No man could tell where the story came from, nor no man could be found who had ever seen the lake. The mountains, or the lakes, or the boiling springs, or the pink hills, may have whispered it at night into some ear. It may have been a dream, but it came and at last that no man doubted it. Many a Maori set out to find the wonderful lake and wandered among the mountains, which grew blacker and blacker and higher and higher as he went on, but one and all came back telling of great streams, of jagged rocks, of dark caverns, but never catching a glimpse of the lake."

"Then our wise men held a council in the great pah, and day by day they studied and thought. At last it was decided that a venerable old man, who had never eaten of human flesh, should go forth alone into the mountains in quest of the lake. Much we wondered as he departed, for with him he took only a staff and no fern root or anything to eat. We bade him good bye with sorrow in

our hearts, for we felt that we should never look upon his face again, and that his bones would bleach upon the mountain side, with no pah to covert them, but there they would lie for all time to come, a warning to men who went in search of the wonderful lake. Days went by and the wise man was given up for lost, when he came down the mountain side and all of our people went out to meet him. When they asked him if he had found the lake he bowed his head upon his breast and smiled, and the people, young and old, gathered about him with many questions, but answered he never a word. One and all saw that a great change had come over him. A mild light beamed in his eyes and a smile ever played about his lips. Kindness and sympathy covered him as with a mantle of sweet fern and all felt that he was good to look upon. From him there went out a power for good never felt in Maori land before, and the people knew that to him had been given a sign which would lead them to happiness. Yet some there were who scoffed and said it was a trick of the wise men, that he had been hidden in the hills and no good would come of it. From that day the wise man went about doing good and to all he said, there be three things :

"Eat not of human flesh."

"Help one another."

"Be content with your lot."

A few followed his counsel and found peace, but the many went on their way, blind in their own conceit. The quiet of the valley and its simple fare were to them as bitter herbs. They wandered away to other islands and over the land to the north and south. They fought and ate each other, and the message of the wise man became to them and to their children but a dream. Once a year, at spring tide, when the moon was full, the wise man left the pah with two young men and went into the mountains and to the lake. Each time they returned on the seventh day and from that day to the day of their deaths their faces shone as did the face of the wise man, and they went about saying ;

"Eat not of human flesh."

"Help one another."

"Be content with your lot."

What they saw, what they heard at the lake, no man knew. Year after year only three went out and returned. At last the hour came when the old wise man fell sick and death came by his side. Then he sent for my father's father, who was an old man, and to him confided the task of leading each year the young men into the mountains, telling him also

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the first visit and what would come of it. This is the story which he told to my father's father:

"I went into the mountains, trusting, that was all. If for me to see the lake would be good for my people then I knew that the way would be pointed out, so I journeyed on and on and though without food for the whole day, I felt no hunger. As night came near I descended into a valley in which plenty of ferns were growing and the water boiling in a small spring. I gathered my fern roots and cooked them in the spring. The next day I faced the mountains again. I had gone but a little way when I saw before me an immense bird pluming itself on a shelving rock. I had seen the skeletons of such birds many times, but never a live bird before. Its plumage was dazzling white and its arched neck shone like the rattle in the sunshine. Its tufted head was more than twice the height of a man's head from the ground and although the bird was a long way off I felt that its eyes were soft and full of tenderness. As I approached the white bird walked away, stopping each minute to pick some green morsel, for its stride was enormous and in the twinkling of an eye it could have mounted into the clouds, hanging over the mountains. All day long I followed the bird, turning and twisting, going forward and coming back again until I lost all reckoning of the path, but something whispered in my ear that it was to be. At night I always found ferns for food and a hot spring so my wants were provided for. On the third day out, as night drew near, I came very close to the bird, almost close enough to touch it, when it stepped through some great ferns with leaves of silvery whiteness, such as I had never seen before, and when I had followed it the bird had disappeared. I raised my eyes and there at my feet was a circular lake, girt about by immense mountains, with cliffs rising from the water higher than twenty Kouris trees. Looking behind me, the way I had come, I saw the silver ferns but in the background a wall of rock through which no opening was visible. Much I wondered, but being tired and hungry I gathered some of the ferns, but no hot spring was at hand as before. I stepped to the lake, reached it with my hand, it was almost boiling. That night I slept beneath the silver ferns. The next morning when I awoke there was no sign of the white bird but a little boat on the sand before me containing three seats and three paddles. After eating some fern root I stepped into the boat and paddled out. Then, for the first, I saw that the lake contained a single island, lying in its centre, but this island was not like any other island. It had three equal sides, on

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was neither tree nor shrub. I soon made my way to its shore. There was only one landing place, a narrow ledge, on which I drew up the boat. By some natural steps I went up and found on the top a circular, shallow basin full of boiling water. The basin was formed of a dazzling white stone with alternate bands of a soft yellow, which I had never seen before, but which I now know the white man calls *haka*. From the centre to the outside these bands ran round and round and it was only a question of time when they would cover the whole island. A great attraction had the pool for me. I sat down by its side and watched the blue water run over the rim and splash its way down to the lake, leaving behind little bands of white and yellow, and as I sat there the steam coming up in the centre sang a song in the Maori tongue. The song was:

"Eat not, eat not, eat not of human flesh."

"Help one, help one, help one another."

"Be content, be content, be content with your lot."

I knew that I was to tell these things to my people and I never forgot them.

Then I lay down and fell asleep, how long I slept I know not. When I awoke the sun was gone and the great cross shining in the sky and yet the pool sang the same song and the water ran over the rim and down into the lake. Once again I looked into the basin and then my heart grew still.

I looked down I saw away and away a group of islands in a blue sea all around them running into little bays and long arms, and under a part of one island was a great fire burning and sending up boiling water. Away out in the sea I saw another island, with an opening in the centre, through which rushed flame and smoke. This island was the gateway for the fires burning below me, on which our pahs were built. On our islands I saw many Maoris, some good, some bad with fierce fires burning in their hearts. And the voice of the spring said, "Behold your brothers, but the day is near at hand when great canoes will come over the waters with white wings and a white man will come in the canoes and in his heart burns still fiercer fires and he will make war on you, not with spears but with things which vomit fire and carry death a long way off. He will kill the Maoris and take the land and in a few years your people will be no more, but to you is given a trust. In the full moon, once in the year, bring hither two wise Maoris and let their ears hear my song. Then shall they go to their brothers and speak the words. If your people listen, one island shall be preserved for them and the black men shall not all die."



ORE

phone 76.

Returning to the shore, I found the moa standing by the bunch of ferns and following it for two days I was once more in sight of the pah. There I told the story of the mysterious lake and the pool to the wise men and when the full moon came the next year three Maoris went forth in quest of the lake. They were guided by the white moa and they too heard the pool sing and saw into its depths. Season after season three men went and came and repeated the song of the pool. The scoffers asked, "Where are the white men with fire in their hearts, and where are the big canoes with white wings?" And the ferns grew and faded into brown and rotted on the damp earth. But at last the white moa came and the wise men knew that the day was at hand. With the white man came also wise men, who, while they pointed to the sky above and told us of the Great Spirit, stole the land from under our feet. And we saw that a great fire burned in their hearts, but it was not the fire of war but a yellow flame, which could only be quenched by a treasure they called 'gold.' These wise white men heard of the lake in the mountains and the pool with its yellow bands and much they searched the mountains but found it not. Then they heard of the journey of the three Maoris in the rainy season, led by the white moa. They watched and when the Maoris set out they followed and thus it was that they found the lake. Three white men had followed the three Maoris. While the Maoris were standing beside the lake the white men seized the boat and paddled as fast as they could to the island. The moa stood on the shore and nodded its head up and down as much as to say, 'You shall see.' Two white men clambered on shore, the other remained in the boat. Once beside the pool the white men saw not its beauty, they heard not the song, for their eyes were filled with the yellow metal and their hearts with greed. They were blind to the blue waters, the purple mountains blind and deaf to all but gold. Then they set to work and dug up the yellow rim and the little channels over which the water ran, and, where once all was beauty and song and the whisper of the Great Spirit, only desolation was left. All day long they toiled and carried the gold and loaded it in the boat and so blind were they that they did not see that the boat grew no deeper in the water. All day the moa nodded its head, all day long the Maoris wondered. Then a great sleep fell upon them. The water in the lake was sinking down, down, down, carrying with it the little boat. It sank away as silently as a bird in the air, without a gurgle or a splash. The fountain sang and flowed and the yellow

bands ran out and down and over the two men binding them fast to the rock. When they awoke they were pinned fast. They writhed and twisted and screamed for their companion in the boat but he was a thousand feet below, paddling, paddling, not to the island not to the shore, but around and around. Then through the jagged rocks, away below came a great roar as of a mighty river lashing itself into fury on the black stones. When this sound fell on their ears they set up a pitiful cry which came over the lake to the Maoris and made their hearts sad. Then the fire died out of the white men's hearts and the green leaves of the ferns, where the Maoris stood grew into wondrous beauty, in their eyes and the plumage of the moa shone like burnished silver. Their cries for help died away in the rushing waters below. The fountain stopped, the blue water sank down to the black river, leaving only a jagged hole, crusted as far as they could see with gold, but now they loathed the yellow metal and blamed it, instead of their own hearts, for all the evil which had come upon them. Out of the pool then came a faint blue wreath, spreading about them, embracing them and creeping like a cloud over the island. Then the hot steam gushed forth. Madly they writhed and gasped for breath but hotter and hotter grew the steam. The sun went down and night came on. Under the green ferns the Maoris lay down and slept. When the sun came up the pool had ceased to vomit steam. Two skeletons on the island were bleached as white as snow on the mountain tops. A skeleton in the boat, with a skeleton paddle in his hands was paddling in a never ending circle around and around.

The moa nodded his head and led the way back to the pah and from that day to this never a moa has been seen in New Zealand. Amid the mountains lies the wonderful lake but it will never be found until the yellow fires have burned out of the hearts of the white men."

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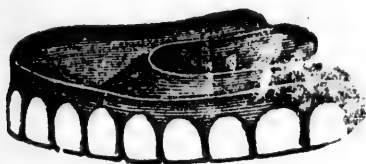
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A STORY OF WESTSTRALIA.

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The mellow notes of a rich tenor voice floated out on the night air from a tent in Kalgourie. As the chorus died away the miners and prospectors gathered around the tent and listened. There was sweetness and pathos in the voice, which stirred to their depths the hearts of the wanderers. The air was stifling hot and as John Beelscroft wiped away the perspiration there were traces of tears in his great, brown eyes. Beelscroft was well known from Perth to the most distant station on the overland telegraph line. He had been a member of every exploring expedition fitted out at Adelaide during the last twenty years. He could manage a camel train better than any man in the country, not excepting the Afghans, imported by the government. When gold was first discovered in Weststralia, Beelscroft had led the pioneer band of prospectors and half a hundred men in Kalgourie were prepared to take their affidavits that there would have been no Coolgardie or Kalgourie, Great Boulder or anything else worth mention of on the great sand plains but for John Beelscroft. As Beelscroft turned away with a suspicious wipe of his eyes with the sleeve of his tattered shirt, two words fell from his lips.

"Poor Molly!"

Molly was only a little baby when, twenty years since, he left his old New Zealand home, where his wife had died. A kind neighbor had taken the child while Beelscroft drifted, first to the gold fields of New South Wales, then Victoria, followed by Tasmania and last of all to Weststralia.

"Drink, drink," he muttered as he walked away into the darkness beyond the line of lights streaming from the tents and huts.

"Drink, drink, and poor Molly forgotten."

Beelscroft turned and braced himself as a strong man face to face with death. He walked back to the tent and entered. If a dozen men were sitting on the same number of up-

ope,

turned soap boxes, whilst the seventh box occupied the place of honor in the centre, with a bottle of three star brandy and some pannakins upon it.

"Have a nip, Beelscroft?" one of the men asked.

Beelscroft's answer was to kick the box into the further end of the tent.

"What do you mean cried the man springing to his feet.

"No more drink for me, not a drop," Beelscroft answered.

"The devil take the stuff, it's the devil's broth and no mistake, I'll have no more to do with it and there's my hand on it."

"Sworn off," queried the man.

"Who was singing?" Beelscroft asked.

"Lee."

"Which man is Lee?"

"The new chum in the corner," pointing to a pale faced young fellow.

"What are you doing here?" Beelscroft inquired of Lee.

"Looking for gold."

"Found any?"

"Not a grain."

"And never will, left to yourself."

"Right you are."

"See here, I'm John Beelscroft, any miner will tell you who I am and what I am. I heard you sing a song a big ago. I want you for a partner. You're a chicken-livered city chap, no good as a miner, no better than a native bear but all the same I want you as a pard. All I ask is that you will sing one song every night. I'll do the work. What do you say?"

"Lee hesitated. Every man present said, "Take him quick, Beelscroft has found more gold claims than any dozen man on the rush."

"It's a bargain," Lee said.

"Shake."

Beelscroft's great, rough hand clasped the thin hand of the singer with a force which made the new chum wince with pain.

"Four months later a camel and two men were slowly crawling over the desert two hundred miles north of New Siberia. The drouth was on and every other prospector had long since been driven in. There was not a drop of water in sight on the ground for one hundred miles in any direction from the spot where the men were and yet they were heading into the desert. Their course was zig zag and appeared to lead nowhere. For a month they had been traversing

country in which no other man but John Beelscroft could live at that season. Even the camel was discounted by the veteran in discovering "soaks," where water could be found by digging. Night after night they lay down on the sand with their tongues hot and blistered, but Beelscroft had dug a hole in the "soak" and Lee and the camel knew that by morning it would have sucked in the precious water and that they would be for another day.

Lee reeled with the heat and staggered like a drunken man. Beelscroft flung him on the back of the camel, where he rocked and swayed but managed to retain his seat.

"Brace up, Lee," he said. "In half an hour we pitch our tent and you shall have a rest for a few days, I intend to look about in this quarter for a time."

"We shall never find any gold in this desert," Lee moaned.

"That's what every new chum says."

Long since Lee had made up his mind that his companion was stark mad and bitterly did he regret that he had ever set out on such a wild goose expedition. His prospects and extrapolations counted not a feather's weight with Beelscroft, who was for gold and determined to find it.

They camped in a "soak" where the veteran began digging while Lee threw himself on the sand and was soon fast asleep. When he awoke a pannikin of water was at his side with a plate of bacon and a piece of hot damper. Refreshed with the meal he looked out of the tent and saw Beelscroft digging, here and there, shallow holes in the sand along the ridge, which stretched away to the north. When the sun went down Beelscroft came back.

"Any luck?" Lee asked.

"Yes. Found gold in several places, but not enough to pay."

"The first we have struck?"

"Yes, but not the last. It's here, but the trouble is to locate it."

"How could it get into this desert?"

"I don't know but the men who make books say that the icebergs brought it along with them when they were floating around here and as they melted it dropped out and the sand blew over it and covered it up."

"I wish an iceberg would come along here now, I'd knock a piece off and stand the camel up against it to cool," Lee drawled.

"Beelscroft had brought his hand-pick into the tent and when Lee spoke of knocking the piece off the iceberg, he me-

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mechanically struck the pick into the sand at his side. It struck some hard substance a few inches beneath the surface, which he slowly dug up and examined by the moonlight.

"Have we a bit of candle dip left? he asked.

"Yes."

"Light it."

The candle was lit.

"What do you think of that?" Beelscroft asked, handing Lee a nugget which would weigh at least four pounds.

"Is it gold?"

"Sure,"

"Where did you find it?"

"Right here."

"Where?"

"There," pointing to a hole in the sand.

"Where's my pick and shovel?" Lee cried, beside himself with excitement."

"Never mind the pick and shovel, sing me a song, if there is any gold it will be there in the morning."

"Nonsense, I can't sing while sitting on top of a lot of nuggets."

"The very thing which should make you sing, it's your part of the bargain and besides I've an idea that the song you sang the first night at Kalgourie will bring us luck."

Lee was then and there compelled to sing the song, but so great was his excitement that Beelscroft declared that such singing was enough to scare the gold away.

By the light of the dip Lee unearthed three smaller nuggets.

"That will do," Beelscroft said as he blew out the candle. Dips are harder to find than gold in these parts: "In the morning we shall dig away the sand and shall know what we have. I think you can go to sleep and dream that we have struck it." Beelscroft spread out his blanket and was soon dreaming of little Molly.

The following morning work began in earnest. The deposit consisted of rotten quartz richly impregnated with gold. In three weeks they had taken out a large quantity of quartz but it was utterly impossible for them to carry it out of the desert. Beelscroft hit upon the plan of pounding up the quartz and thus extracting the largest pieces of gold. Owing to the friable nature of the rock this was a comparatively easy task. When three thousand pounds worth of gold had been secured Beelscroft announced that the time had arrived when they must break camp. The water in the "soaks" was gradually disappearing and he prophesied that a great



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drouth was near at hand. The gold and the remaining provisions were loaded on the camel and they set out for New Siberia. On the tenth day out the camel fell sick and they were compelled to call a halt. Two days later the camel died. They were fully one hundred and fifty miles from the nearest camp and Beelscroft fully realized the danger which compassed them. They had camped near a gum tree which had blown down. Beelscroft cut off from the large end two pieces about ten inches in length, boring a hole through the centre of each with his pick. They formed the wheels of a rude cart, which two days later he completed and loaded with the gold and provisions. This cart he slowly drew over the sand. The heat was telling terribly upon Lee. The wild birds, which had ventured into the desert, fell dead from the trees beside the dried-up water holes. The last twenty miles of the journey Lee was drawn on the cart in a half unconscious state and for days after he was unable to recognize even his preserver. A second camel was purchased at Siberia and once more they set out for Kalgourie.

Before leaving the mine Beelscroft had taken the precaution to cover it with sand so that no trace of the find remained. At Kalgourie they took passage for Coolgardie, which they reached without further adventure. At that point the gold was sold for notes and such was the confidence reposed in Beelscroft that an offer was made to float the proposition into a company with a capital of fifty thousand pounds at one pound a share, fully paid up.

At this stage Beelscroft was stricken with the fever. Lee nursed him with the faithfulness of a son, but the disease made rapid progress for the man was worn out in consequence of the hardships which he had undergone. For days he was delirious and for hours the only words which passed his lips were, "Molly, poor Molly."

On the seventh day the physician informed Lee that hope must be abandoned. It was only a question of a few hours. Beelscroft might for a short time recover his senses, but he would certainly die.

As the last rays of the sun shone into the tent he suddenly opened his eyes and looked about him.

"Where am I?" he whispered.

"In Coolgardie; you have been very sick but the worst is over."

The shadow of a smile crept over the dying man's face and he vainly strove to put out his hand, but failed.

He closed his eyes and then said, "I'm booked for the last

coach and the driver will soon be on the box. Get a piece of paper and write down what I have to say.

"Twenty years ago I lived at Hookatika, New Zealand, my wife, in giving birth to a child, died. Her last words were, 'Name the baby Molly.' A kind woman who had been our mutual friend, took little Molly and I went off to the gold fields. I never wrote back. The demon, drink, seized me when I had money. Year after year slipped away and I never realized what a wretch I was till the night I heard you singing in the tent at Kalgourie. That was the reason I took you for a partner. The song was as sad in one part as the cry of a little child that has lost its mother. I determined to make a stake and find Molly, I shall never find her now, but you must find her and give her my share. That's all."

"What was the woman's name who took Molly?"

"Manx, Elizabeth Manx. She was a widow in very comfortable circumstances."

"And your girl's name is Molly Manx?"

"I never thought of that, but it may be that after I went away she gave Molly her own name."

"Molly Manx! Molly Manx!" Lee exclaimed. "Why did you not tell me this long ago? You must live. You cannot lie now. Molly Manx is the dearest and sweetest girl in the world and she has promised to be my wife."

"Your wife! You know Molly! My Molly! Beelscroft thrust out his bony hand, which Lee grasped while tears of joy ran down their cheeks.

"My Molly, where is she, how does she look, does she ever think of me?"

At that instant the doctor hurriedly entered the tent and Beelscroft fell back, the picture of a dying man.

"If he ever had a chance you have ruined it," the doctor said in an angry voice.

"You do not understand," Lee answered.

For hours Beelscroft lay in a stupor, then to the surprise of the physician he recovered consciousness and began to mend.

In a quiet little cottage at Warnambool, Beelscroft sits in the ingle with his grandson on his lap while Lee sings one of the tenor songs which cheered his pard out on the desert.

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A WONDERFUL GOLD MINE.

A NEW ZEALAND STORY.

News has been received in San Francisco, by the last steamer, of the discovery in the antipodes of the most remarkable gold mine in the world. It has long been known by scientific men that underlying the North Island of New Zealand are tremendous volcanic forces. The existence of the hot lake district, the King's country, an immense area practically under Maori rule furnishes the proof of forces sufficient at any time to destroy the island. A few years since an eruption took place which threw down the magnificent Pink and White Terraces. Several days after the eruption the ashes fell in the streets of Sydney, twelve hundred miles distant.

Westward from the volcanic region of the New Zealand coast, distant one hundred miles, lies a small island, nearly regular in shape. As the island lies out of the track of the steamers trading between San Francisco and Auckland, it is rarely seen and still more rarely visited. It is marked on the best charts, but heretofore has had no name. Its extent does not exceed five hundred acres and as its sides are precipitous, resembling the needle rocks, approaching the harbor of Auckland; it was not supposed until a few months since that it had ever been inhabited. This supposition has been abandoned in consequence of the arrival at Auckland of a man who tells a wonderful story and confirms it by exhibiting some two pounds in weight of exceeding fine gold.

The story told by Anson Bonspiel is briefly as follows. Bonspiel is a mechanic who had acquired considerable experience in Queensland in sinking wells for squatters. He is a practical all-round man. Bonspiel left Brisbane, Queensland, in 1897, taking with him a small outfit of drills and other appliances for sinking wells and sailed for Auckland.

On his arrival he found it impossible to obtain work at his usual occupation. He stored his outfit and obtained work with Messrs. J. and F. Pearson as a machinist. In June 1897, a man who gave his name as Mr. George, arrived in Auckland in a small sloop and reported at the customs that he lived upon a small island off the New Zealand coast. George began making inquiries for some person who understood drilling wells. He was directed to Bonspiel, and a bargain was struck. Bonspiel was anxious that two assistants should be taken but George assured him that he was prepared to furnish all the necessary help and pay liberally for the time spent. As they would be compelled to depend upon their own resources a supply of coal, a forge, steel and iron were taken on board. Bonspiel was in no wise surprised when he found that the crew consisted of four Kanakas who spoke not a word of English. The sloop headed a course north by west. As evening approached Bonspiel informed his employer that he possessed some knowledge of navigation and that he was prepared to take his trick at the wheel. George declined the proffered assistance upon the plea that he would swing a hammock on the deck and that one of the Kanakas could be depended upon to keep the proper course. At ten o'clock Bonspiel turned in, in the comfortable little cabin vacated by the captain and slept soundly until three a.m. When he retired the wind was due aft, by the pitching of the vessel he knew that it must have veered around. As his confidence in Kanaka seamanship was limited he went on deck, George was sleeping soundly. Only two of the crew were on duty, the man at the wheel and the lookout. Glancing at the binnacle he saw that the sloop was running due west, which meant that they were rapidly going out into the Pacific, leaving New Zealand behind. When he attempted to call the attention of the wheelsman to the fact the man only shook his head. He roused Mr. George who immediately gave orders to have the sloop put about on a different course. Going below Bonspiel thought the subject over and resolved in future to keep watch himself. When he went on deck in the morning he found that they were again running west by north. He had been told that the island was distant but a few days' run from Auckland, but day by day went by and no sign came. He lost faith in the captain's seamanship and redoubled his watchfulness. He was not long in discovering that immediately, when he went below at night, the course was changed and continued until he was expected on deck in the morning. For ten days they sailed north, east and west. The weather was delightful, the pro-

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sions good and grog served three times a day, and as his
ay was going on he did not complain. Gradually it dawn-
upon him that all the shifting and turning was resorted to
prevent him from ascertaining the latitude and longitude
the island. This conviction was strengthened by the fact
at George after taking the altitude of the sun daily, retired
the cabin to work out the reckoning. Bonspiel was
ever permitted to see the log book and when he inquired
to their position he was told that they were making a slow
n. On the tenth night out Bonspiel was suddenly awak-
ed by a grinding noise against the sloop's sides. He went
deck and found that the sails were furled and that she
y in a narrow, rocky cove with the rocks on either side so
near that he could touch them with his hands.

"We are here at last, rather a long voyage, I must have
been wrong in my reckoning," George said when he saw
Bonspiel.

"All's well that ends well," Bonspiel answered.

"It will soon be daylight."

"Yes," looking up at the perpendicular cliffs, "but how
e we to get ashore?"

"Simple enough by daylight but dangerous at night, I would
advise you to turn in for a couple of hours."

"I think I will try and climb the rocks and have a look
at the island."

"No, you are too valuable a man for me to lose now, it has
taken me nearly a month to get you here and I must take
precious good care of you."

When Bonspiel came on deck he saw that the crew had
been reinforced by a dozen Kanakas. At the stern of the
vessel the rocks, on each side, had been quarried away so as
to form two narrow grooves into which the men were fitting
heavy timbers. George explained that this was done so as
to protect the sloop from the action of the waves when the
vessel was in that quarter as the island possessed no other
harbor. At the bow of the vessel foot holes had been cut in
the rocks by means of which one climbed from shelf to shelf
in ascending the summit. The captain went first and care-
fully pointed out the way. When the top was reached the
whole island was visible. The scene was inexpressibly
solitary and gloomy. The eye only rested upon vast masses
of rock thrown up and tumbled about in indescribable con-
fusion and upon which only grew a green moss.

"No wonder you required a well in such a place," Bons-
piel said to his companion. For a moment he doubted the
sanity of the man. Why any sane man should select such

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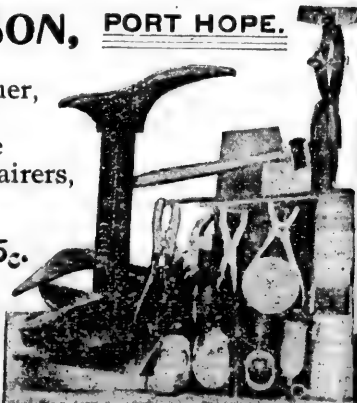
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an island for his home he could not understand. He heartily wished himself safely back in Auckland.

"Wait a few minutes," said George and you may have reason to change your mind. Follow me." They advanced along a rude path which gradually descended. Quite unexpectedly they came out from behind a great boulder. George stopped and pointed below. At their very feet opened a narrow valley five hundred feet wide and half a mile long. Its sides were a mass of fern trees of emerald green.

"How beautiful," Bonspiel exclaimed.

"Not a bad place to dream away one's life," remarked George. "But come, I see they have kindled the fire, I sent one of my men on an hour ago. A cup of coffee and a baked ham will be waiting for us with a rasher of bacon and a fresh egg."

They climbed down into the valley and soon came upon a cluster of grass thatched huts. Under three palm trees just beyond stood a comfortable cottage of corrugated iron but overgrown with creepers bearing bright red blossoms.

"How did you get the cottage here?" Bonspiel asked.

"I had it made in sections in Sydney, brought it over on the sloop and the niggers set it up. Will you have a bath, you will find everything in there," pointing to a wing of the cottage.

When Bonspiel entered the cottage after his bath he was surprised to find George dressed in a neat fitting suit of white flannel standing beside a table covered with books and magazines. A glance at the breakfast table told him that the china was of the choicest make, the coffee service of solid silver and the napkins of the finest linen. The living room bore the ear-marks of bachelor's quarters, but upon every hand were evidences of wealth, refinement and culture. The Kanaka servants were thoroughly trained and glided about the room noiselessly. On ship-board George had seen a man of few words, at the head of his table he was able and entertaining. He asked Bonspiel how long it would take to set up the drilling machinery, how many men would be required to operate it and the progress he was likely to make per day, judging from the nature of the rock which he had seen.

During the day the drilling machinery was hoisted out of the sloop by means of a derrick. George was a man of energy and under his direction the work went rapidly forward. The following morning George said, "Come with me and I will show you the place where I wish you to sink the bell."

They set out up the valley, through the centre of which ran a small stream. As they proceeded they came frequently to stone dams thrown across the stream. "But for these dams," George remarked, "the precious water would run away and be lost. From these ponds I draw off the water to my taro patches and to the roots of the banana trees, which you see I have planted. My vegetable and flower garden is also supplied in the same manner."

"The valley is so small that I do not see how you will be able to make the experiment pay," Bonspiel remarked.

Bonspiel noticed that the paths around the cottage and up the valley were formed of a peculiar white sand which from use had been solidified into a concrete mass.

"Where do you obtain such beautiful sand," he inquired.

"Up at the curiosity," was the answer.

At the upper extremity of the valley they came upon a gigantic boulder, from the rock beneath issued a tiny stream of water finding an outlet through an iron pipe which had been cemented into the crevice. At the end of the pipe the narrow gorge had been bridged over with eucalyptus planks two inches in thickness, the plank were firmly bolted to heavy timbers beneath. The lower extremity of this covered way was closed by a massive door secured by two locks. Bonspiel surveyed the structure with amazement.

"What does it mean?" he asked.

"A precaution on my part. Dip your hand into the water."

"It is very cold," Bonspiel said.

"You will be surprised when I tell you that there are times when it is boiling hot."

"Wonderful."

"Yes, very remarkable. I can only account for it on the hypothesis that the island being of volcanic origin it yet retains beneath it a slumbering fire. At times the heat is communicated to the reservoir of water below. It would not do to permit the hot water to descend the valley as it would destroy every green thing. On the other hand one must always have a supply of water on hand at the head of the valley. There is a stone dam on the inside at the end of the covered way. When it is full of hot water it is turned off at the pipe thus furnishing a reserve."

"But why do you cover the place up so securely?"

"My men are all from the islands of the South Pacific they are passionately fond of bathing in hot water, in fact they found it impossible to keep them out of it. They would get up in the night and spend hours in the pool. The result

tre of which came frequently. But for these the water would run out of the water to the trees, which had flower gardens. You will be remarked. Cottage and up and which from he inquired me upon a tiny stream which had the pipe the alyptus plant only bolted to of this covered by two locks ant. and into the there are time for it on the origin it yet the heat is could not do it would des must always of the valley of the covered off at the pipe ly?" South Pacific water, in fact they would get The result

was that they were not able to work the next day and many of them fell sick in consequence. At Sydney I procured the blank, brought them over in the sloop, and covered the pool."

"How often does the spring flow hot water?"

"Sometimes every third day and sometimes not for a week."

"How long does the flow continue?"

"Its flow is intermittent, alternating from hot to cold, but I have never known the hot water to last more than six hours continuously. There are times when the hot water is ejected with great force bringing with it a quantity of fine, white sand, from which I make my walks. It has happened upon several occasions that the spring has ceased to flow. No doubt the sand has choked up the passage. It is for that reason that I brought you here to drill a well hoping to strike the reservoir and ensure a constant supply."

"Where will you bore?" Bonspiel asked.

"Here," pointing to the rock a few feet from the boulder. "I forgot to tell you that when the spring ceases to flow it has a peculiarity, it sucks in the air with great force, so great that were you to place your hand at the end of the pipe it would be mangled."

"I am anxious to see this wonderful spring at its hot water turn," Bonspiel said.

"It may begin to-night, I understand that it is overdue."

That evening they sat late on the verandah enjoying their pipes. At eleven o'clock a man came running up and informed George that the spring was breathing hard.

"Come," said George, "this fellow tells me that the spirit has begun to breathe."

"What spirit?"

"Oh, the fellow down below whom the natives believe is the origin of the phenomena. I will explain when we go up."

When they reached the spring not a drop of water was issuing from the pipe. On the contrary the air was being sucked in with immense force. Now the spirit is only in a playful mood, but like all spirits is not to be depended upon, he may suddenly change his mind."

"You refer to the Kanaka spirit."

"Yes, they have invented a theory which accounts for the whole thing. It is that down below lies an immense giant, whose stomach consists of an enormous pot which is filled with burning coals, which possesses the remarkable quality

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of never being consumed. The intense heat makes the giant thirsty, he quaffs the cold water of which there is an unlimited supply. This he continues to do for days until his stomach is full. The fire goes on burning, the water grows hotter and hotter, not being able to take any more water he resorts to the expedient of sucking in the cold air to give him relief. That is what he is doing now. When the water begins to boil he can endure the agony no longer, then he spews it out."

"Quite as plausible as some of the scientific theories," remarked Bonspiel.

"I agree with you."

Suddenly the suction of air ceased.

"He is turning sick," George remarked.

Then followed a choking sound, as if some obstacle had blocked up the passage. It was not unlike a cough. Alternately the air was sucked in and then exhaled. Suddenly it gushed the water hissing and steaming, as if directly from the infernal regions. A cloud of steam rose up and settled over the end of the valley. The Kanakas came rushing down to the spring but were ordered back to their huts by their master.

"I will venture a bottle of champagne that we will not be in bed half an hour before they will all be back here practicing some incantations. I cannot keep them away from the place. The gentleman down below fascinates them."

"Not unlike some of their white relatives," was Bonspiel's comment.

The day following work was commenced on the well. On the surface the rock was found to be exceedingly hard, but at the depth of twenty feet it was honey-combed, the sand pump bringing up quantities of pumice stone. At forty feet the drill entered a quartz formation.

"We may find that this quartz is gold bearing," Bonspiel remarked.

"I think not," George's answer. "I have examined the island and see no indications of the precious metal on the surface."

"Yet it looks like Queensland quartz," Bonspiel replied.

"I am searching for water."

Bonspiel subsequently remembered that from that day the debris from the well was thrown into the covered way. At the hundred and ten feet depth they struck a plentiful supply of cold water. Operations were suspended for several days, but the supply was evidently unlimited. Bonspiel

was surprised when he found that George was not satisfied.

"You must bear in mind that it is directly after the rainy season, he said. "Now that I have you here I must take every precaution, put in the drill and proceed with the work."

At one hundred and fifty feet a new reservoir was reached, the hot water came out with immense force and the original spring ceased to flow. George was satisfied.

"We must devise some way for shutting off the supply else everything will be ruined," he said.

Bonspiel proved equal to the task and had the flow under control in a week's time. The new well retained the peculiarities of the original spring, in that it alternately emitted cold and hot water, but the volume was enormously increased. The day after Bonspiel noticed that the covered way must have been opened for a quantity of white sand had been thrown out on the bank. The work must have been done at night. Why? He could not ascertain whether the work had been done by the Kanakas as they did not speak a word of English. From the first there had been a mystery about the place. Now it came upon him with redoubled force. The massiveness of the covered way, with its iron bars and padlocks were out of keeping with everything else on the island. The impression was intensified by the reticence of George, who, as a host and employer, was most urbane, but otherwise as silent as an oyster. What had led him to take up his residence upon such an island? Evidently not poverty. During the voyage from Auckland Bonspiel had noticed in a locker in the cabin, a small iron-bound keg, fitted with an appliance which prevented the hoops from being removed. At that time he supposed that it was filled with spirits, but when they were unloading the sloop he saw it tossed from one man to another in a way which proved that it was empty. For some unexplained reason he mentally decided that this keg was in some way connected with the mystery. His curiosity was thoroughly aroused and he determined to probe the matter to the bottom.

When he went to bed that night he could not sleep, his doubts and conjectures had grown into a certainty that the covered way hid the mystery. Finding sleep impossible he got up and went out on the verandah. The night was calm and the moon lit up the valley with almost the clearness of day. Then he strolled up to the well. As he approached there fell upon his ear a dull, grating sound, he paused and listened. He could not discover where the sound came from. No

one was in sight and he finally concluded that the noise was made by the water. He looked down upon the covered way and his eye caught the gleam of a faint light through the interstices of the planks. He listened and from his proximity heard a shovel being thrust into the wet sand, and its contents thrown into some receptacle.

"Some one at work below," was his mental conclusion.

The shovelling continued for a few minutes and then ceased. It was followed by a swishing noise, familiar to every miner. A cradle was at work.

"This means gold," almost fell from Bonspiel's lips, so great was his surprise.

He scarcely drew his breath lest he should be discovered. He felt certain that the man below was George, but since his arrival on the island this was the first instance in which he knew of his performing any manual labor. Silently Bonspiel withdrew to a safe distance and then retraced his way to the cottage, which he entered and took a seat near the window which commanded a view of the path leading to the well. His patience was at last rewarded. George came slowly up the path as if worn out with fatigue. Bonspiel soon decided upon his course of action. When daylight broke he proceeded to the well and carefully examined the locks on the gate at the end of the covered way. He made a note of their construction and then went into the temporary blacksmith shop used in sharpening the drills, and set to work with a will. As he was a skilled mechanic he turned out two skeleton keys before he was called to breakfast. The following night Bonspiel kept watch; after he was supposed to be asleep George proceeded to the well and remained there until three o'clock in the morning. So the game of double purpose went on night after night for a week.

He must be a man of iron will and great perseverance, was Bonspiel's conclusion. If he were to discover me in the covered way, I believe he would lock me in and leave me there to rot. He should be labelled "dangerous." Bonspiel was a judge of men and with George his caution bid him pause but the knowledge that a gold mine lay concealed beneath the planks, which its owner only worked at night, for some mysterious reason, urged him forward with irresistible force and this feeling was intensified by the knowledge that in a few days he would leave the island, probably never to return, as he doubted very much his ability to find it again. His theory was that George had discovered in the bed of the creek a rich alluvial deposit from which he dug the white sand. He had built over the place so as to effectually con-

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steal it from any person who by chance might visit the island. At a later date he had conceived the idea of having a well sunk so as to be certain of a supply of water with which to wash the gold and also to render the place inhabitable, as the original spring was liable to become choked up at any time.

On the sixth night George went to bed and remained there. An hour later Bonspiel was kneeling before the locks. One skeleton key had done its work, the other was a failure. The key only turned part way and then stuck. He drew a small file from his pocket and set to work on the key. An hour of valuable time was thus lost but at last he had the satisfaction of hearing the bolt turn. With trembling hands he opened the door, stepped inside and closed it behind him, leaving only a small crack. To prevent it being shut and locked upon him he gathered a number of small stones and placed them in a row at the bottom. The sweat poured from his forehead and dropped from his hands. With each rustle of the fern-fronds, bordering upon the gully, he paused and listened. He imagined that he heard George's footsteps on the verandah and along the walk. Under ordinary circumstances he was a brave man, that night he was an abject coward. Inside was total darkness, he cursed himself for having neglected to bring a candle with him. Fortunately the moon was shining and a few faint rays crept through the sides of the covering. He could, in a dim way, discern the sides of the place, but that was all. He was standing in a pool of water, for the well was shut down. By the faint light he carefully groped his way forward and soon stumbled over something, which on feeling of he recognized as a miner's cradle. One of his suppositions was thus verified. In his groping his hand came in contact with a brass candlestick holding a very short piece of candle. His heart gave a jump, now he would solve the mystery. He lit the candle, by its faint light he saw that a series of stone dams had been built across the ravine some ten feet apart and two feet in height. So far as he could see these dams were full of water. At his feet lay a shovel. He took it up and thrust it into the water in the dam before him. It came up filled with exceedingly fine sand. This sand he placed in the cradle with several other shovelfuls, then he began to wash off. As he worked the cradle it flashed upon him that the sand must have been brought up by the water in the well for from its whiteness and exceeding fineness it did not discolor the water. Now blind he had been not to see this from the beginning. If there was gold it must come with the sand. In the midst

of his speculations the candle spluttered and went out. He could not proceed with the work in the darkness. He would go to the cottage and get a candle. As he turned to go and as a proof of his visit, should anything prevent his returning, he thrust his hand in the cradle and took out a few hands full of the sand in the bottom, placing them in his pockets, then he made his way to the door which he swung open. Before him stood George, a revolver in hand.

"Halt," he cried. "So you are a thief."

For a moment Bonspiel could not speak. He realized that his life hung in a balance and that a false move would mean death.

"No," he said at last with a violent effort to appear calm. "I am not a thief, my curiosity was aroused and I decided to gratify it. I had no right to come here, and in doing so I did wrong. If the candle had not gone out I should have probed the matter to the bottom."

"No," said George. "You would have been buried in there."

"Very well, the candle went out. On my honor all that I know is that you have built a series of dams across the ravine, you have a miner's cradle in there. I tried to wash some of the sand but before I had finished the candle went out. I was on my way to the cottage to obtain a candle when I met you here."

"You give me your word that you have not been in there before to-night."

"I do, and for the very good reason that from the night I discovered you working in here up to to-night you have been there yourself."

"You were playing the spy then."

"Yes."

George raised the revolver and pointed full at Bonspiel's breast. Bonspiel's heart stood still, but he did not flinch. For a full minute George was undecided, then he lowered the pistol and said, "Give me the false keys." Bonspiel handed them to him.

George locked the door, then they proceeded to the cottage, not a word being spoken. At the door George said, "after you have changed your clothes, I wish to transact some business with you."

When Bonspiel entered the sitting room he found George seated before a desk.

"What is the value of your plant?" he asked.

"I paid nearly one hundred pounds for it in Brisbane and there is the freight to Auckland, but it has been used for some time,"

"Would you sell it?"

"Gladly."

Opening a drawer, George drew out a small bag and counted out two hundred sovereigns. "Is that enough?" he inquired.

"More than enough."

"You were to receive ten shillings per day?"

"Yes."

"It is now six weeks since we left Auckland, we shall sail for that place after breakfast. Call the time three months. Will that be satisfactory?"

"Yes, it is more than my due."

George paid the amount and then called a servant, who brought a bottle of champagne.

"I drink your good health," he said, filling the glasses. "You have done your work well, to my satisfaction, your health."

"And the same to you," said Bonspiel, but "....

George held up his finger.

Bonspiel never completed the sentence.

"You had best pack your box and have all ready," George said, rising.

Two hours later they were on their way to the sloop and as the sun came up, with all sails set, she was rapidly leaving the island behind. Bonspiel determined to profit by his experience on the former voyage and keep a log of the journey. He carefully noted the course each day, the rate of speed as well as he could estimate it. Before going to bed he also noted the direction of the wind and several times during the night got up and ascertained whether the course of the vessel had been changed. He found that as soon as it was supposed that he was asleep the course was invariably changed only to be changed again at daylight. Fortunately for his calculations the wind blew constantly from the same quarter. As day by day went by Bonspiel became more and more puzzled. He had started with the hypothesis that the island lay in the neighborhood of one hundred miles west of the New Zealand coast. Auckland should therefore lie south and east. According to his log book the course had been nearly due west for several days, then they ran south. Either his calculations were all wrong or they would never reach Auckland. Two weeks passed when he ventured to ask George how much longer the voyage was likely to last.

"I cannot say," was the answer, "I am a very poor navigator and sadly out of practice, no doubt we shall pull up in port some of these days," and he smiled significantly. Twenty-

one days out they sighted the light-house. Bonspiel shook his head. There must certainly have been an upheaval of the New Zealand coast, the light had gone up at least one hundred feet. A moment after he burst into a hearty laugh. "Clever, very clever, if my eyes serve me that is the light at the Heads at Sydney, and here I have been looking for Auckland. A little out of practice, yes but not so much so but that he hit Jackson Harbour, a bull's eye." He went forward to the captain and said, "You have missed Auckland and struck Sydney, only an error of some twelve hundred miles."

"Then you recognize the place?"

"Yes, and for my part I am glad you made the mistake, I prefer Sydney."

"I am glad to hear it, I must certainly be growing stupid."

They ran up to Woolloomooloo Bay. As Bonspiel was getting into the yawl to go ashore, George, in bidding him good bye, slipped a twenty pound note into his hand.

The following morning the sloop had disappeared, nor has it been seen since either at Sydney or at Auckland.

When Bonspiel reached a hotel he secured a room, then went out and purchased a tin wash dish. He had had no opportunity to examine the sand up to that time. Now he determined to put his theory to the test. The moment he poured out the sand he saw that it was full of exceedingly fine gold. When he washed it off he took it to a jeweller's and had it weighed. The result was two pounds, three ounces, four pennyweights and ten grains. Only think of it, he exclaimed. There must be twenty thousand pounds worth of gold in that flume and it probably ran in there while I was on the island. I see it all now. The original spring was too small to suit him. He also feared that it would clog up. When I struck the cold water he was not satisfied; he had discovered that the gold was only forced up in the hot water and that accounts for my not discovering that I was opening the most wonderful gold mine in the world, the steam prevented me from seeing it. What a fortune it would be to stake out a claim there and sink another well.

At last accounts Bonspiel was organizing an expedition to Auckland, which will set out in search of the island. It will be provided with all the latest machinery for sinking artesian wells but whether the mysterious island will be found or not remains to be seen.

THE THREE GREAT PEARLS.

A NEW GUINEA STORY.

At the Queensland National Club, Brisbane, I made the acquaintance of an Englishman, Leonard Chapman, who fascinated me. I can describe the charm of his manner, his fund of information, and the originality of his conversation in no other terms. He had travelled extensively and possessed a thorough knowledge of the South Pacific. Chapman was not over thirty-five years of age, he spent his money with a lavish hand, even for that lavish country, and I learned from some of his acquaintances that he paid Brisbane an annual visit, and that he was engaged in pearl fishing in Torres Straits, off the north coast of Queensland. No one appeared to know the precise locality. His appearance was striking in the extreme. No taint of the beach-comber hung about the man. On the contrary, he reminded me of a College professor out for a holiday. His fund of anecdotes was unlimited, yet he was as modest and unassuming as he was undoubtedly brilliant. From the tenor of his conversation I gathered that he took a special interest in scientific discoveries and inventions, and I soon learned that he had not only read of the nineteenth century marvels, but possessed a thorough knowledge of the means by which they were wrought. I inclined to the opinion that he had devoted many years to the study of chemistry, but he was equally conversant with the principles of electricity and of molecular research. So varied were his gifts and so accurate his knowledge, combined with originality, that I marvelled he should bury himself on an island in a half-known sea, for I gathered that his was an island home. So startling were his views relative to changes to come in the near future that there were times when I sat spell-bound. He held that science would extract nitrogen from the air by a simple and inexpensive

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process enabling man to increase a thousand-fold the fertility of the earth. In one of his conversations he said, "From that hour man will no longer toil for his daily bread."

"Now he is grovelling in the earth, then he will be a giant, with nature as his hand maid. By artificial processes we shall produce gold and silver and all the precious stones. We shall, in a few hours, from the elements, bring forth pearls and all the most prized and beautiful things which nature has provided. It was never intended that we should dig and delve for these things, they were provided as samples, as illustrations. Nature turned them out of her laboratory in the twinkling of an eye and man can do the same if he is guided by her hints. The water wheel, the steam engine and the electrical engine are but the implements of a savage, they will disappear the moment we have cast off our swaddling clothes. The motive power of the future will be the sun's rays. Tens of millions of tons of energy, but another name for force, are daily going to waste on the earth's surface, while the blind toil with pick and shovel and plough. The air was intended for navigation, not the water. We shall not be mere copyists but shall improve upon nature. She only produces the bitter plum, orange and grape. It remained for man to render them sweet and luscious. The same principle applies, not only to the fruits and grains, but to every created thing. Then and not till then will life be worth living."

Many of his views were so new and startling that I refrain from stating them, and yet they were presented with such an air of plausibility and so buttressed by facts drawn from recent discoveries, that no one in the club ventured to dispute them, and yet the following day when other men tried to restate them, they appeared most visionary. I have never been able to decide whether this was due to want of knowledge or to a charm which Chapman wove around his hearers.

From a prospector I learned that several rich quartz claims had been discovered in the north and thither I decided to proceed. I secured passage on a coast steamer for Port Darwin, the point where the cable from Asia lands on the Australian coast. Arriving at Port Darwin I made a trip into the interior but found nothing of value. At the Port I secured a large sailing boat and set out to explore the coast. With a plentiful supply of provisions I set sail, taking care to skirt the coast as closely as possible. I camped at night and on the second day, in making a run across a large bay, a sudden squall came up, prevalent in that latitude. The

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boat was rapidly driven out to sea and the Australian coast soon lost sight of. The wind increased in fury and I gave myself up for lost. Night was coming on, the haze and spray prevented my seeing a dozen yards in advance. I knew that I was rapidly approaching the coast of New Guinea and the reputation which the cannibals of that island enjoyed in the southern hemisphere did not add to my peace of mind. I heard the breakers roaring and caught sight of the white crests of foam. I was powerless to change the course of the boat by a single point. I threw off my coat and boots and determined to make a fight for my life. Suddenly the boat struck, broached broadside and rolled over. I was seized by the waters for a brief moment and then flung upon the beach. The warmth of the sand was comforting and worn out as I was, I soon fell asleep, nor did I awake until the sun was high in the heavens. I was in a small bay where the woods came down to the very shore and nothing was visible which would indicate that a white man had ever visited that part of the coast. Fortunately I was provided with a water tight match safe and I determined to secure some shell fish on the beach and cook them for breakfast. I waded into the surf and soon had a supply of pearl oysters which I cooked. They were extremely tough and unpalatable but they satisfied my hunger. The boat had been washed ashore and was a complete wreck and I was compelled to abandon all hopes of using it again. I made my way into the thicket and had proceeded but a few yards, when I came upon a small, square building made of rough logs. There was no window and the massive door was secured by two large padlocks. I knew that the structure was the work of a white man but for what purpose it had been built I could not determine. It might be a place used for storing provisions by pearl fishers, if so, I would not die from starvation. I tried the door and then attempted to peep between the logs, but as the interior was pitch dark all my efforts were fruitless. By climbing an adjacent tree I reached the roof and after an hour's hard work succeeded in removing two logs. I saw that the hut only contained machinery. I clambered down inside; there was a small naphtha engine and a network of wires with several other devices, the use of which I did not know. Then I made my way out again and as I was replacing the roof I heard a whizzing sound which was followed by a stinging sensation in the leg which stuck a long bamboo arrow. Instantly I dove through the opening into the hut. There at least I was

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safe for a time. Immediately I heard voices in a language which I did not understand, followed by the running of feet. I was surrounded and it was but a question of time when I should not only be captured but probably eaten. I seized an iron bar and determined to sell my life for its full worth. Then came a lull. Were the savages building a fire for the purpose of roasting me out or of cremating me for their next meal? Half an hour of dread suspense went by, followed by a knocking at the door and a voice asked in English, "Hello! who are you and what are you doing in there?"

"I am a shipwrecked man. I have been shot in the leg by the natives and I am hiding in here to save my life."

The key turned in the locks, the door opened and I was face to face with Leonard Chapman. For a moment he did not recognize me, so woe-begone was I without coat or boots and the blood oozing from the wound in my leg.

"Chapman" I exclaimed.

Then he recognized me and reached out his hand, but not with the cordiality which I had expected. I noticed that a look of vexation, if not of distrust, was written on his face.

"How did it happen," he asked.

In a few hurried words I told him the story.

"It is fortunate that the arrow was not poisoned," he said "or you would have been booked with a through ticket. Can you hobble for half a mile or shall I send the natives for a cart?"

"I think I can manage it," I answered.

A little way off stood a number of natives with great bushy heads and holding in their hands immense bows and spears made of bamboo.

"Your retainers gave me a warm reception," I remarked.

Chapman smiled. "They are not my retainers, they are natives who protect my property along the coast and to whom I give a few pounds of tobacco and occasionally a bottle of square gin."

Half a mile brought us to a deep bay. A yawl lay near the shore manned by four as villainous looking Malays I ever set eyes on. At a signal from Chapman they brought the boat along side, we stepped in and they pulled away. The water was shallow and the bottom muddy. A yard or a mile from shore we came to Chapman's home. Large bamboo poles had been planted in the mud and at a distance of twenty feet above the water other poles had been

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ashed in a horizontal position, thus forming the foundation of the floor of the hut. The floor was also of bamboo poles and over it was built a substantial camp thirty feet long and twenty feet wide. When we arrived a ladder was let down and up it we scrambled.

"This is most extraordinary," I said.

"Not for New Guinea," Chapman answered. "Let me see the wound?" "Fortunately only a flesh wound, it will be troublesome for a couple of weeks, the only danger is inflammation in this hot climate. I have a medicine chest and a lotion which will remove the soreness."

When the bandage and the lotion had been applied I felt more comfortable.

"Why did you build your house on stilts?" I asked.

"To guard against attacks by the natives."

"Then they are not to be trusted?"

"No, I have been attacked three times since I took up my quarters here. On the shore one would certainly be murdered. The jungle is so thick that they creep up to the door and make a rush, then all is over. Out here they must come in canoes, I keep a watch day and night, if they are seen approaching we are prepared. By this windlass we draw up the cutter, we have an ample supply of ammunition, pointing to a heap of stones on the floor. They can only climb up by means of a ladder and before they can accomplish that we simply drop a stone through the bottom of their canoes, then there is trouble down below. A few shots from a Winchester and the battle is won. The natives in the immediate vicinity have learned that I am not to be trifled with and with them I am now at peace. The danger lies with the fellows down the coast, who come up on expeditions against other tribes and incidentally take in the white man."

"Prospecting for gold is sufficiently hazardous for me and I shall leave the pearl fishing to others," I remarked.

When a substantial meal had been served I asked, "Why do you employ Malays?"

"They are good fighters and the best pearl fishers."

"What did you build the hut in the woods for?" I inquired.

"When I first came to the coast I had the hut built for the purpose of conducting a series of scientific experiments."

For several days my leg was so stiff that I could not get out.

Each morning Chapman, with four of the six Malays,

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went off in the cutter and did not return till noon. I noticed that only a few pearl oyster shells had been stored in the hut. I saw no signs of a diver's apparatus or of the small nets used by the divers to bring up the shells. There was an air of constraint upon Chapman out of harmony with the man I had known in Brisbane.

The Malays did not speak English, and even if they had, I doubt whether I should have been able to extract any information from them. They were devoted to Chapman and evidently could be relied upon in an emergency.

Daily when Chapman returned I looked in the bottom of the cutter but saw no pearl oysters.

"The fishing must be poor," I said one day.

"Months are frequently spent in searching for new beds," Chapman answered.

"Do you bring the oysters here when you find them?" I inquired.

"No, the stench would be unbearable, we have to let them decay before we can search for the pearls."

When my leg improved I wondered that I was not invited to accompany my host in his daily trips, but he gave no sign. A week slipped by and I was beginning to discuss how I was to get away from the perch, as I had grown to all it, when the natives came down to the shore, late in the afternoon and made signs, which immediately threw the Malays and Chapman into a violent state of excitement. Rifles were loaded and a plentiful supply of ammunition lowered into the cutter. When all was ready Chapman turned to me and said: "Don't be alarmed, one of my stations is in danger of being looted. I must teach these savages the rights of private property."

I immediately volunteered my service.

"No, no," was the answer. "A wounded man would only be in the way, you have already paid dearly enough for your visit without getting another taste of bamboo."

As the cutter drew away I noticed that all the Malays had accompanied Chapman, leaving me to guard the house. At the end of the platform, on which the house was built, rested a medium sized canoe, made from a single log. The cutter soon swept around the point and was lost to view. I listened attentively for half an hour, then there floated across the head-land a faint echo of firearms, the battle had evidently begun. Fainter and fainter grew the sounds and after five minutes they died away in the distance. I watched for the return of the victors but they never came. That night I did not

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close my eyes but sat peering out upon the sea. The following day was full of dread and anxiety. Every instant I expected to see the canoes of the savages sweep around the point and swoop down upon me. Several rifles had been left behind. These I loaded and made ready for the foe. When the second night came I gave myself up as lost. It was utterly impossible for me to keep awake. At first I only slept a minute or two, then suddenly awoke and sprang to my feet. I heard the dip of paddles, the stealthy creep of naked feet on the platform at my side and saw the gleam of savage eyes. Nature at last succumbed and I forgot the horrors of the situation. When I awoke the sun was creeping up, the sea was calm and not a sign of man white, black or brown was to be seen. The house was the only place of safety and yet such was my anxiety to ascertain the fate of Chapman and his companions that it was with the greatest difficulty I restrained myself in going in quest of them. On the third day I could endure the suspense no longer, I lowered the canoe to the water, loaded all the guns, took on board the balance of the ammunition and a supply of provisions and sailed away around the point. I was not long in suspense. In the little bay, where I had been washed ashore, lay the wreck of the cutter. Over the gunwale hung the corpse of a Malay, with a spear run completely through his body. Whether Chapman and the remainder of the party had been killed or had made their escape to the woods I was unable to decide. Only the dead Malay remained, the sail and the oars of the cutter were gone. I paddled to the cutter and listened, not a sound smote my ears save the ripple of the water on the beach. Finally I decided to visit the small house where I had taken refuge from the natives. I crept cautiously through the underbush: the house was standing but the door had been battered down, the fragments of the engine and other appliances were scattered over the ground. When I retraced my steps to the beach I noticed on the sand a number of fine copper wires in a tangled mass, mechanically I stooped down and took one of the wires in my hand, then I saw that it ran into the bay.

"All that remains of Chapman's wonderful dreams," I said to myself.

The spirit of curiosity, which had been so keen in the past, was aroused, I would ascertain what was at the end of the wire. I brought the canoe around to that point, and keeping the wire in one hand, gently paddled out. When I reached a point where the water was about four fathoms in depth

I came to a bamboo pole which had been driven into the bottom of the bay the top of the pole was only a few inches under the surface of the water and the wire ran up to and over the top. Putting my hand down and grasping the end of the pole I was surprised to find that a small pulley had been fitted into the top of the pole, through which the wire ran and then dropped perpendicularly. I carefully drew up the wire and imagine my astonishment when I saw attached to its end an immense pearl oyster. I landed the oyster and broke off the wire and then returned to the shore. I was very curious to ascertain what the oyster contained and proceeded to open it, a feat I accomplished with the greatest difficulty. Carefully removing the meat of the oyster, I saw at a little distance from where the wire entered the shell a faint blue circle and in the circle, one enormous pearl and three small ones. My heart nearly ceased to beat. The great pearl was pear shaped and in beauty of tint and exquisite coloring, far exceeded any pearl which I had ever seen. I knew that it was worth a very large sum, but its size was so great that I was unable to estimate its market value. The three small pearls were very fine, but were completely overshadowed by their magnificent sister. In my exultation I forgot the fate of Chapman and my own immediate danger. I hurriedly went ashore and from the tangle of wire traced another wire, which ran into the water. This wire I followed with the same result, it terminated in an oyster. In the second oyster was the same blue ring, in which lay a great black pearl with two small pearls of the same color. These pearls differed from those first found in that they were perfectly round. Again I went ashore and once more I was rewarded with one immense pearl and two small ones, the largest being the most beautiful in my collection. A careful search proved that all of the remaining wires had been broken and I was not able to make any other finds.

Then a great fear fell upon me. I had intended to return to the perch and wait for a few days, but possessed of the treasures of the deep, I resolved to make my escape. I hoisted the sail and steered south. Five hours out I sighted a steamer and half an hour later I was on board one of the British India line bound for Brisbane. On my arrival at that port I immediately communicated with the authorities and the Colonial Secretary despatched a full account of the tragedy to the High Commissioner at Thursday Island.

Six months later I read in the Melbourne *Argus* that the murder of Captain Chapman had been avenged by sending

H.M.S. Tiger to New Guinea, where she shelled several native villages, and drove the savages into the interior. I kept the finding of the pearls a secret as the ends of justice would not be aided by making my discovery public.

After reflecting upon the facts I decided that Chapman had discovered a process by which, with the aid of electricity, he had been able to stimulate the growth of pearls to an abnormal size and also to develop them with greater rapidity than under normal conditions. I recalled his statement at the Queensland Club and no doubt remained in my mind that he had selected the New Guinea coast as the place where he was least liable to be disturbed by white men, owing to the hostile character of the natives. I also found that the scientists had concluded that pearls were formed by some extraneous substance getting inside of the oyster, thus setting up an irritation and giving rise to the term, "The tears of the oyster."

There was but one market in the world where my three great pearls would find purchasers at their full value and that was London. I therefore took passage a few months later on the Orient steamer, Orizaba, and a jeweler in Regent street paid me a very handsome sum for my find, but he informed me that he would willingly have given double the amount if I had been able to produce two that would match.

An old friend, whom I had not seen for years, invited me down to his box in the country for a weeks' shooting. One day as we were standing before the Crown Arms, a carriage rolled up to the door. I gave a great start. Leonard Chapman hurriedly alighted and went inside,

"Who is that man?" I asked the moment I recovered my voice.

"The young Earl." He only came into the estate a few months since. His life has been quite a romance. The Black Earl, his father, quarreled with him some ten years since and turned him out of the Hall. The trouble arose over the Vicar's daughter, whom the young man wished to marry. For nine years not a word was heard from the son. The Black Earl had lived a fast life, but after the quarrel he reformed his pace and when he died everything was mortgaged to its full value. After his death the Jews swarmed down like the plagues of Egypt. Three months later the heir suddenly appeared. The debts were paid and what is still better, he married the girl, though it is said he never wrote her a line during his absence.

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I entered the Arms and found the Earl speaking to a game keeper. As he turned to leave the room, I said: "Permit me to congratulate you, Mr. Chapman, I felt certain that the natives had turned you over to the great majority."

He raised his eye-glass and gave me a well-bred stare.

"Chapman you say? I am the Earl of Ibster,"

"So I am informed, but in New Guinea you were Mr. Leonard Chapman."

"How many cases of mistaken identity are constantly occurring," he said, "the Tichborne case being one in point. Excuse me, sir, I trust that you will yet be able to find your New Guinea friend, Mr. Chapman." He raised his hat, bowed, entered the carriage and was driven leisurely away.

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THE GARDEN GULLY MINE.

"You ken Bendigo," said my companion, looking out of the corner of his eye at the bottie sitting on the table before us.

"Right well," I answered. We had dropped in at the Criterion, Swanson street, Melbourne, for an evening.

"Weel," continued Sandy McLeod, "it's a long time agone but I'll never forget it."

"Forget what?"

"The Garden Gully, did you ever hear the story?"

"No, I'm a new chum, as you know."

I poured out a glass of Falon's sparkling, at the sight Sandy smacked his lips. Sandy was a colonial solicitor and apparently an unprofitable mine to work for a story, so I bided my time. The glass of wine began to mellow his heart, for he abruptly exclaimed, "Men on gold fields are crazed with greed, but a good-looking woman sends them stark mad. Even I, Sandy McLeod, was once mad."

"It was only a passing craze," I suggested.

"Not a bit of it, mad for months, mad when awake and doubly mad when asleep."

"What cured you?"

"A nip of the same dog," and then he burst into a laugh.

"One more glass and then I will tell you the story."

Settling back in his chair, he began in a voice, mellower than I dreamed that he possessed:

"Teddy O'Flynn, yes O'Flynn with a big O, as he used to say, had a little cabin on the Bendigo field, and behind the cabin was a little garden in the gully. It was the only garden on Bendigo at that time and we all knew it to a man. No deep shafts then, only a spade, a pick, and a tin dish, and thirty thousand miners on the field. That garden grew roses and English roses too, at that. I can see them now and it's near on fifty years ago. They whispered to every man Jack of us of home, dear home. When we went out there and

leaned on the palings of a Sunday, back we were in our native villages. Teddy O'Flynn was not the man to cultivate roses, save the ones which blossomed on his nose and they were always in full bloom. Teddy had a foster daughter, the queen rose of Bendigo, and as the roses bloomed so bloomed Rosa, for that was her name. While the roses were in bloom on Saturday afternoon Rosa made a round of the camp. She never sold the roses but she made each miner a present of one, and the miners not to be outdone, made her a present of a pinch of gold. She had to pinch it herself between her rosy little finger and thumb. Rosa took up the camp in a regular way so that in time we all got a rose and were satisfied."

"Teddy O'Flynn had never studied books and yet he was a bit of a philosopher, and an Irish philosopher at that. Teddy never worked and yet he ate and drank of the best on Bendigo. Perhaps the pinches which Rosa made had something to do with Teddie's good fortune. The miners were content, Teddy was happy, and Rosa—well the whole camp was in love with her."

"And you fell in love with her too," I ventured to remark.

"I never denied it."

"At that time there were but two lawyers on the field, Phalin Shea and Sandy McLeod, that's myself. Part of the time we dug on the lead, for we both held claims, but when a dispute arose Phalin was retained by one client, and McLeod by the other, then we fought it out before the Gold Commissioner and honors were generally equally divided. The Shamrock and the Scotch Thistle, they used to call us. The best of friends we were, though we often nearly came to blows. Rosa distinguished us from the other miners by calling us gentlemen. Phalin and I were regarded as the favored suitors but that did not prevent the other men from striving to secure such a valuable claim. One evening I was at Q'Flynn's cabin and the next night Phalin was at the same place and basking in the same smiles. To all of our vows Rosa returned the same answer.

"What would become of Teddy O'Flynn if I married?" We each promised to allow Teddy a pension for life. Rosa well knew that Phalin and I could not scrape up a hundred pounds, but like all miners, we were willing to bank on the future for any number of thousands. Rosa was most impartial and fed each on the same manna. Our infatuation increased month by month and when the rainy season came on and no roses remained Teddy proved equal to the occasion

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and regularly borrowed half a sovereign from each when we called at the cabin. Phalin may have lent the money out of sheer Irish good-will but I know that Sandy McLeod, in his heart regarded him, Teddy, as a golden fleece. How the contest would have ended I cannot say, but unfortunately Teddy suddenly conceived the idea of becoming rich. That decided our fate. His plan was to sink a shaft in the garden in the gully and open up a gold mine. Naturally we expected that Rosa would protest, but on the contrary she declared that the plan originated with her own sweet self. She had dreamed that there was an immense deposit of gold hidden away beneath the English roses. Teddy had only to dig and he would find the treasure, but no person was to assist him and the work must be done at night. Only Phalin and myself were taken into the secret. Teddy went to work and day after day poured into our ears the history of his progress. As the garden lay far removed from the Bendigo lead and no indications existed that gold would be found, in our hearts we secretly felt that it was a clever device, upon the part of Rosa, to keep her foster parent out of the public and at the same time set him to work. The mining had been going on for about three weeks when one afternoon Phalin and I each received a note from Rosa asking us to call that evening at the cabin. We were punctual to the minute, but each was somewhat crestfallen on discovering the presence of his rival. Teddy O'Flynn was laboring under an excitement which he in vain attempted to conceal. After a substantial supper and a glass of hot toddy, Rosa drew the curtain of the four pane window and then told us the story.

Teddy had struck upon one of the richest leads ever found on Bendigo. The earth was literally packed with gold. Then Teddy took up the running.

"I tell yez I've struck it."

We both grasped him by the hand, for Teddy had suddenly become an important factor, a factor we instantly saw must be counted upon and conciliated. Rosa was now sole heiress, it might be to millions. Not that we loved her any more ardently, that was impossible, but fortune had suddenly turned the wheel and we keenly felt the change. All we could say to Teddy was, "Rich, rich."

"Just loaded down with the yellow beauty," he exclaimed. "Come down and see the jade. She's led me many a fine paper from the old sod, up here among the kangaroos and the wallaby and the bears wid no tails and the dirty hathen nagers, but I've got her down in the gully, and it will be

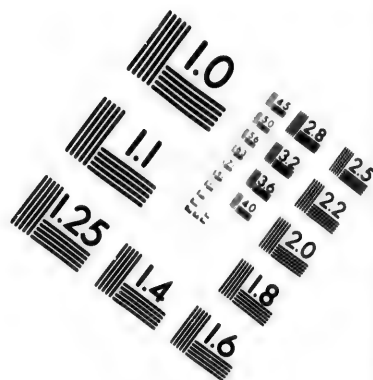
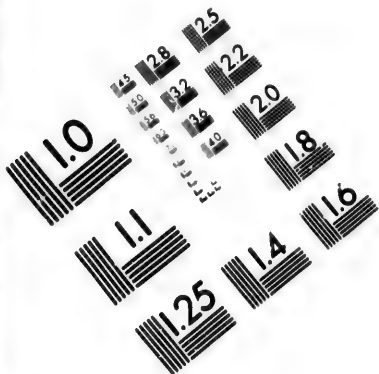
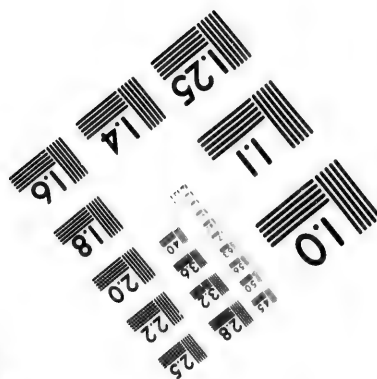
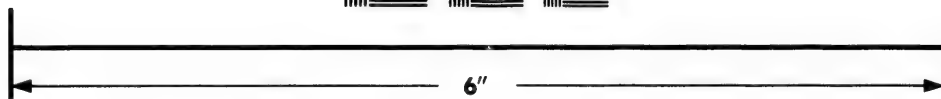
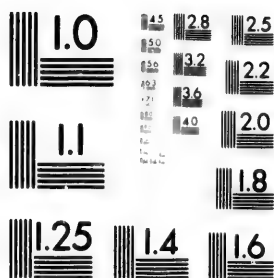
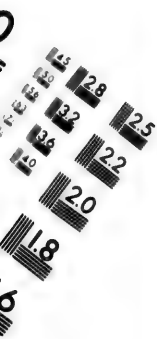


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sailing away to the blessed shores of St. Patrick that Teddy O'Flynn will be, with a mighty big O."

"Come with me this blessed minute"

We hurried down to the gully. Once on the spot we saw that Teddy was original in his mining. He had cut a series of short trenches which grew deeper and finally terminated in an irregular hole, into which we all crowded, though unable to stand upright, so low was the pit. Teddy lit a candle and pointing to the pick said to Phalin, "dig, dig," then he gave me the shovel. The ground was very hard, of a dull yellow color and interspersed with small grey, broken quartz crystals. We filled a wash-tub which Teddy deftly lifted to his head and balanced with his hands, then marched out and up to the cabin. In the kitchen we began to pan out the contents of the tub with the aid of some water and a tin wash-dish. Teddy stood aloof leaving Phalin and McLeod to do the work. The earth was literally full of coarse gold. In all of our experience at Ballarat and Bendigo we had never seen its equal.

"I want you gentlemen to float a Company," said O'Flynn.

"What shall we call it?"

"The Saint Patrick."

"No," said Rosa, "I dreamed it out and I must name"

"What shall it be?"

"Call it the Garden Gully."

Then and there it was christened and baptised in the wash-tub.

"How much shall we float it for?" inquired Phalin.

"Fifty thousand pounds at a pound a share. Give all the boys a chance."

The following morning the notice was on the door of the commissioner's office and within two hours every rod of land or half a mile on each side of the cabin had been staked out. The camp went mad, hundreds of good claims were abandoned and as promptly jumped by the unlucky. Before the sun went down Phalin and I had more cases than had ever fallen to us before in our lives. When questioned about the Garden Gully we related the story of the wash-tub. That day every share was sold and half a crown paid down. For two days it was almost impossible to get near the cabin. The earth was swarmed with miners but not a spec of gold was found.

On the morning of the third day Phalin and I found our claims besieged by an angry mob. During the excitement Teddy had been transformed into Teddy O'Flynn, Esq., a

personage who held high carnival at the Golden Fleece and who, during that time, had ordered and helped drink one hundred bottles of champagne at twenty dollars a bottle. The situation was serious. Phalin and I were marched up to the Golden Fleece where O'Flynn was secured and the trio, followed by thousands, proceeded to the Garden Gully where Rosa was mounting guard over the entrance to the mine. She was armed with an antiquated musket and resolutely kept the men at bay. A fierce light burned in her blue eyes which enhanced her beauty a thousand fold. At our suggestion two miners were let into the pit to secure some wash-dirt. Our lives hung upon the issue. If the miners did not find gold our fate was sealed. Phalin, McLeod and Teddy would dangle from the limb of the nearest gum tree within ten minutes. The dirt was brought out and panned off in the presence of the mob. I shall never forget the silence which fell upon the men till my dying day. When the miner turned and flashed the gold in the pan in our faces a cheer for O'Flynn broke forth, and such cheers as Bendigo had never heard before. The very hills rang again and again. Rosa was the heroine of the hour. Dirty and greasy miners clasped her in their arms and kissed her with frantic joy. O'Flynn and his solicitors were escorted in a triumphal march back to the Golden Fleece where Teddy made a speech and 'shouted' for all who cared to drink. In the confusion Phalin and I made our escape. The next day shares in the Garden Gully advanced to two pounds each. A week later the mine was turned over to the share holders and work commenced. Teddy O'Flynn was entertained that night at a banquet at which it was declared that he was the gold king of the land of the Southern Cross. At midnight Teddy sank a limp mass under the table and was carried to bed with the honors of a dead Pharaoh.

For a few hours the Garden Gully realized the wildest dreams and then just as suddenly stopped. Not even the colour could be found. Shares dropped to a shilling and no takers. The gold Commissioner ordered an investigation. During the inquiry it was clearly shown that the mine had been salted. The plan had been to first dig the hole and then charge a gun with powder and coarse gold and fire it into the earth. Rosa, who was innocent of the fraud, testified that at night she had heard many shots and that O'Flynn had explained that he had been shooting at kangaroos which came to gnaw the rose bushes. When confronted by the evidence, O'Flynn refused to confess maintaining a dogged silence, save that if the mine was salted Rosa and he

solicitors were innocent. The money received was returned to the share holders, except a few hundred pounds which O'Flynn had squandered. O'Flynn was committed to stand his trial.

The following night Phalin and I repaired to the little cabin where, much to our surprise, we found Rosa, apparently in the best of spirits. When we asked her for an explanation she said:

"I tell you there is plenty of gold in the Garden Gully and it was not put there by Teddy O'Flynn. I saw it again last night in my dreams. It is down deeper and runs away out there," pointing toward the range. "Will you dig for it or shall I do the work myself."

We suggested hiring two miners.

"No," she said, with a toss of her pretty head, "it must be found without any outside help and Teddy set free."

Instantly we both agreed with her. We would have agreed to any proposition falling from the same lips. Without a moment's delay she produced two miner's caps, into the peaks of which she thrust two candles, then marched us out to the pit. The candles were lighted. Rosa took a seat on the tub, we seized the pick and shovel and began to dig. Rosa chatted and laughed, the hours flew by, at midnight she brought us a lunch and two bottles of ale, but it was not until near dawn that our taskmaster called a halt. Rosa explained that during the day she would wash some of the dirt and report the result the next night. Worn out and completely exhausted Phalin and I staggered to our huts. Not a word was exchanged as we stumbled down the path. Our hands were covered with blisters, our clothes dedaubed with yellow clay, our faces streaked and seared with soot and grease from the dripping candles. Two such melancholly objects could not be found in all Bendigo. Each was determined not to yield. It was a contest of Scotch grit and Irish pluck. All day long we slept or nursed our lacerated hands, each recuperating for the second struggle. We were animated by no hope that gold would be found, a more powerful influence was at work and bade us continue the struggle. At night we were again at the cabin. Rosa reported "No gold." Then we renewed our labors, with the same hardships and the same results. For eight nights in succession the struggle went on. Our legal business went by the board, rumor said we were drinking ourselves to death and appearances confirmed the rumor. On the ninth night imagine our surprise when Rosa informed us that we had struck the lead and in proof exhibited fully an ounce of the yellow metal. No

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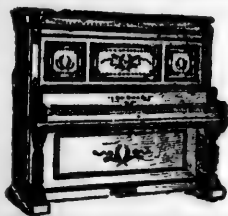


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miner ever gazed upon a great nugget which he had found, with joy equal to ours. It was a drawn battle. When will it end? was the query in our minds. Rosa gave no sign but served an excellent supper, prepared to celebrate our success. It was then arranged that Rosa was to pay the gold Commissioner a visit the following morning and inform him that the lead had again been found in the Garden Gully and that consequently Teddy O'Flynn had committed no fraud and should be released. Our offices was opened that day, but no attention was paid to our reformation so great was the excitement. An investigation of the mine proved the truth of Rosa's statement. Once more the tide turned in favor of Teddy O'Flynn and for the second time he became the gold king of Bendigo. Teddy had sold the Garden Gully for a rich mine and it was rich. The shareholders demanded the return of their stock, paid in their money and gave Teddy a second banquet at the Golden Fleece, with the same results, save that Teddy went under the table at ten thirty instead of at twelve, a weakness attributed to his confinement in the caboose and consequently condoned by his friends.

Three days later Phalin and Sandy McLeod each received a note from Rosa requesting them to be present at the cabin at eight p.m., and also stating, in post script, that it was an important occasion, therefore we were to be dressed in our best. Phalin inferred from the word 'important' that he was the lucky man, while I drew the same inference from the same word. Walking on the air, for our happiness made us oblivious of Bendigo, its dust and its wretchedness, we approached the cabin at the same time, punctual to a minute. We passed compliments of the day and then surveyed each other. Phalin was dressed in a pair of black trousers, a white shirt and a collar, a yellow vest, but no coat. Sandy boasted an antideluvian dress coat, blue trousers and a red shirt. We were met at the door by Rosa, clad in a white muslin gown, with a great bunch of roses at her belt. I had never seen her look lovelier. So great was my happiness at securing the prize that the words died on my lips. Phalin was equally overcome and for precisely the same reasons. Teddy received us with genuine Irish hospitality and a glass of whiskey. Entering the cabin we were face to face with a young English curate who had been sent up from Melbourne as a missionary. It was evident that the hour had come, we were confronted by our destiny. The curate remarked in a languid drawl, "This is a happy occasion." Rosa smiled her sweetest. Then she went out to the kitchen and came



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back blushing and leaning on the arm of Dennis McCarthy, a young Irish miner.

"My dear friends," she said, "I have bid you to my wedding, Dennis is the lucky man, we pledged our troth in dear old Kerry."

The ceremony proceeded and each kissed the bride. It was the first and last time. How we spent the next hour I shall never know and Phalin can furnish you with no fuller particulars. I have a confused recollection of Rosa, the curate, Teddy, a bunch of roses and McCarthy, that is all. At last we got away, heaven only knows what we said. Once out on the path we stalked along in moody silence. When we came to the Golden Fleece we both turned in, entered the private parlor and ordered whiskey, straight. Two hours later we were sent home by the landlord in barrows. When I awoke the next morning I found myself in Phalin's hut and in Phalin's bed. Phalin found himself in my hut and in my bed. How the thing happened we have never been able to explain. The following day when we met we concluded to enter into partnership and the sign reads to this day, Shea & McLeod, solicitors.

"No, we have never married."

"What about the Garden Gully?"

The mine is running yet and has paid the shareholders many handsome dividends."

"Rosa?"

The day following the wedding, the bride, McCarthy and Teddy took a special stage for Melbourne en route for the old sod. A week later my partner and I each received a letter, precisely the same, written in Rosa's best hand, containing a certified cheque on the Bank of Australia, drawn in our favor, for five hundred pounds.

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RATCATCHER'S CAMP.

A NEW ZEALAND STORY.

Ratcatcher's camp was not a place of beauty, but there was life in Ratcatcher's gulch in those days. When night set in and the men struck work, Queen street, half a mile of straggling tents, huts and dug-outs, was a blaze of light. Alhambra, once used as a travelling tent by a circus, was the especial pride of Ratcatcher's Camp. There the bottles flashed, the band played and Madge sang. Madge was a yellow-haired girl, who at night was dressed in a white gown covered with spangles, said by Tom King, the owner of the Alhambra, to be diamonds. Owners of other lesser hells muttered under their breath, "glass," but they only muttered, they had excellent reasons for not disputing that or any other statement made by Tom King. Tom was an ex-champion pugilist, and his temper inclined to be brittle where Madge was concerned.

Madge was a blond with big blue eyes, in whose night-depths lurked a regiment of twin devils. As the night grew the devils changed into triplets and took on additional horns, tails and hoofs. It was only at night that Madge would sing, not as you guess some music hall patter, but songs of home and dear old England. The charm lay in the unexpected, the surprise, the contrast. She never looked it. She drank her champagne with an abandon startling even to Ratcatcher's gully. She lured and enticed lucky miners to the gambling tables and laughed in their faces when they had lost their last ounce of dust. No man ever turned to her for sympathy, there was something in her eye which forbade that, but when Madge sang not a glass clinked, not a poker chip rattled, the oaths and coarse jests of five hundred miners died out, there was only the wild cheer at the end of the song. Her voice was sweet, pathetic, as full of melody as a lark's notes. It thrilled every fibre, touched every heart-string and sank down, down into the soul. It awoke mem-

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ories slumbering for long years and vibrated forgotten cords, corroded by absence, drink and despair.

Madge was a mine of gold for the Alhambra, good for one hundred sovereigns a night, if a penny. By day she was only a bar maid, by night, a queen. At the nod of her head a man's life was not worth a tanner. If she ever had a woman's heart there remained no sign, save the song. Lured by her, hundreds had been ruined, but amid all the fleecings and plundering Madge had never been known to take even a pinch of gold. Her victims hated and cursed her by day, but when the first note of a song fell from her lips the curses died away and there stole into the hearts of all the conviction that at some time Madge had suffered a great wrong.

One evening as the sun was slipping over the hills Madge stood by the faro bank where Aleck Bowie dealt the game. She had brought up a new victim with a heavy bag of gold. Her eyes gleamed as ounce by ounce the dust was swept in by the bank. Suddenly the man sprang to his feet, "You are cheating," he said to the dealer in a hoarse whisper.

"It is a lie," was Bowie's answer.

"No," whispered Madge with her sweetest smile.

"I will take the pile," cried the miner, reaching out and drawing a heap of soverings across the table. Bowie drew his revolver. There was a flash, a sharp report, and Bowie lay dead beside the table, with a bullet through his heart. The miner deliberately placed the sovereigns in his pocket, turned on his heel and walked away.

Madge shouted, "He's a liar and a thief. Give me a gun, you cowards."

At that moment the stage rolled up to the tent door and a small, plain woman alighted. Not the class of woman that haunted the Alhambra, every man knew that instantly.

Seeing Madge the stranger said, "Can you tell me where I can find Alexander Bowie? I am his wife."

Madge answered not a word, her blue eyes dilated wider and wider and the miners of Ratcatcher's camp saw her turn pale and falter for the first time.

The woman brushed by Madge and entered the tent. A piercing shriek, a dull thud, told the story. She had almost tumbled over the dead body of her husband. Most of the miners fled to their cabins. The man who had fired the fatal shot walked away and was never seen in the camp again. Madge picked up the woman as if she were a child and carried her into the annex of the tent. That night the same went on again, but in a listless, half-hearted way. Madge sang no songs. There was laughter and shouts and

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oaths, but a dread something haunted the flapping curtains and lurked in the dark corners. Long before the usual hour the miners went back to their tents with graver faces than ever before seen in Ratcatcher's gully.

The next morning the wail of the new-born babe came out of the Alhambra annex. With its life, death came to the mother. The wife had gone to seek her husband where no Ratcatcher's camp and no Alhambra will ever be found. The wail, so faint, so feeble did not die on the morning air, but went up the gulch, crept into every miner's cabin and softened every miner's heart. The next day the gambler and his wife were buried side by side. A simple wooden cross marks their resting place and Madge planted the cross with her own hands. Madge went back to the Alhambra annex but no offer made by Tom King could induce her to set foot within the great tent. With the babe in her arms she smiled at his offers and then said, "The Alhambra is not a fit place for even a foster-mother."

The following day, at noon time, Madge went down among the claims and told the miners she wanted them to build a cabin for her and the child. Saturday was chosen for the work. Five hundred miners worked, and that night saw the first cottage in the gulch, with a neat plot in front, a garden patch at the back, a stone wall of boulders and an English five-barred gate. "Home" was written all over the little place and many a heart was filled with memories of other cottages hidden away in merry old England. A pinch of gold from each man sat Madge and the child up in housekeeping. Madge named the child Maud Elsmere Bowie. From that time on, of a Sunday, the miners came, at first by ones and twos and then by tens and scores, to see the babe, and as they grew, to hold it in their great, rough arms while Madge sang the same songs their mothers had crooned into their ears when they too were babes. The men saw that a great change had come over Madge, but a still greater change was being wrought in themselves.

The fierce light gradually died out of Madge's eyes, crooning and singing to the child, her voice took on mellow notes. She grew younger day by day, smiles crept over her lips and laughter rang out from the cottage. If a miner fell sick Madge was at his cabin, cooking bits of delicacies, cheering with gentle, hopeful words, brewing simple herbs and brightening up the hut as only a woman can. Insensibly there stole over Ratcatcher's gully a new influence, an indescribable something, intangible but doubly potent for the reason.

Madge never preached, her knowledge of camp life was too accurate for that. How she accomplished her ends no man could tell, but trade at the Alhambra began to fall away. The lesser hells struggled for a time and one by one closed their doors. After Madge had talked with a miner about his wife and little ones the man began to save and count the months when he could get away from Ratcatcher's camp. Even Tom King was compelled to acknowledge that he was fairly beaten and the Alhambra folded its tents and stole away to another camp, followed by a few who declared "that the gulch was too goody, goody for any white man with hair on his face and sand in his boots."

During the winter the miners built a dam across the gulch above the camp so as to turn the water in the spring freshet into another ravine, for the pits were growing deep and the floods might wash out the timbers. In the spring the stream ran a banker, night after night a watch was set at the dam, but the watch was finally abandoned. One night at midnight, part of the dam gave way, a torrent of water burst through sweeping down upon the hillside cabins. A few men were drowned, but nearly all made their escape. A few minutes later the whole structure tumbled into the stream, the great body of water set free, became a mighty torrent, tearing down Ratcatcher's gulch. Madge's cottage was a quarter of a mile below the camp. What happened there no man knew. The next morning the cottage had disappeared. More than a mile below the searchers found, in the top of a tree, Madge, battered and bruised. She lay half submerged, yet still alive, clinging with one hand to the branches and with the other holding the babe above the water. They carried her to the camp, but she never spoke. Three days after they laid her away under a great tree. On her neck was found a plain, gold locket attached to a little chain. The locket contained the miniature of a venerable old man, the reverse side bore the inscription, "To Maud Elsmere, given by her father." By universal consent the chain was placed around the child's neck. A woman was brought up from the coast to nurse the waif, the child of Ratcatcher's gulch. Three months later the camp experienced a new excitement. A detective, all the way from Scotland Yard, arrived searching for Maud Elsmere, whose photograph he possessed. She had been traced from Liverpool to Brisbane, thence to Charter Towers, then to New Zealand. Every miner in the gulch knew that Maud and Madge were one, but not a word was said as to her death. They felt if there was ought to hide for Madge's sake it would be hidden. When they

learned that she had simply run away from home, that her father was dead and that she was the only heir to Elsmere Manor, Dorset, by inspiration they formed a plan. The detective was told of the flood, the death of Maud and the recovery of her child. The marriage certificate of Bowie's wife was produced and all doubt as to the heir removed. Then the astute detective from Scotland Yard had the fact of Madge's death attested by half a hundred miners and departed with the child, after it had been kissed by every man in Ratcatcher's gully. That was twenty years ago, but read the marriage notice in the *London Times* of Saturday and see if Maud Elsmere Bowie, foster-daughter of Ratcatcher's gully is not now the Countess of Sexton.

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A STRANGE PARTNER. AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

When the P. & O. steamer called at Albany, West Australia, only two passengers came on board, a young Englishman and his wife. Before we reached Sydney I made his acquaintance in the smoking room and he told me the following story. I give it in his own words:

My name is Henry Detmold, I was born in Lincolnshire, England, and I am twenty-nine years of age. My parents were of the middle class and gave me a fair business education. When I was eighteen my father secured me a position in the County Bank at a very small salary; there I remained until two years ago. My salary had been increased to eighty pounds a year and I saw no prospect of an advance for years to come. I had never been out of my native county save two flying trips which I made to London for a few days during my holidays. By accident I picked up a copy of the *Melbourne Age* in which I read an account of the discovery of gold in Western Australia. The spirit of adventure, so strong in an Englishman's blood, was aroused. I resigned my position and took passage for Sydney. From that point I made my way to Perth, the capital of West Australia. I took passage on the coach for Coolgardie, and during my trip over the desert of sand, which I was compelled to walk, my box only riding on the stage, I more than once came to the conclusion that a situation in a bank at a meagre salary was highly to be preferred to gold seeking with the thermometer at 120 degrees in the shade. Coolgardie was a wilderness of tents and fleas, with absence of water, and what was worse, I discovered that the prospector's country lay still in the interior, but for shame and the knowledge that my position in the bank had long since been filled, I would have turned back. In Coolgardie I made the acquaintance of George Vail, a young Australian from Gipps Land, who like myself had been attracted to the west coast by the tales of wonderful finds made by the first comers to this land of sand and heat. Vail was very slight in build and in no wise adapted

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to roughing it as a miner, but such was his charm of manner that he won my sympathies and as we were attracted by our mutual ignorance of our new life and unfitness to cope with the difficulties which hedged us in we soon became inseparable companions and finally decided to strike out for the interior and try our fortunes. Our last money was expended in the purchase of a mule and provisions enough for a three months trip. The mule was to carry the provisions while we were to trudge alongside on foot. With swags strapped on our backs we turned our faces towards the east and bid good bye to Coolgardie. Fifty miles inland found us in the most bleak and desert-like country which you can imagine. We had turned to the north of the beaten track in the hope of coming upon a new field not taken up by the old-time and experienced prospectors, who over-ran like the locusts of Egypt. We camped upon the confines of a small creek, the only one in that part of the country. Day after day was spent in vain attempts to find a trace of gold, but so profound was our ignorance of mining that our ill success was no proof of the absence of the precious metal. A few miles to the north of the camp the sand plains terminated in a series of hills, almost mountains. This region we carefully avoided lest we should be lost in the hills. As a last resort we decided to explore the foot-hills, taking care to keep our camp continually in sight. To avoid fatigue we placed part of our supplies on the mule and with the tent advanced to the range which proved to be well watered, much to our surprise none of the water coming down to the plain, it being sucked up by the sand in a short distance. Our search was fruitless and we had determined to abandon our quest and return to Coolgardie when the following remarkable circumstances transpired. In consequence of Vail's youth and lack of strength we had made a division of the work, he took charge of the culinary department while the hard labor fell to my lot. But for his skill in this particular I should have abandoned the search in two weeks. Given the most common materials he could be relied upon to prepare an excellent meal. One day while I was absent in the hills he found in the neighborhood of the camp a small piece of opal which evidently had recently been broken from its bed in the rock as the fracture was new and bright. Our conclusion was that we must have a neighbor but why he had not made his appearance known we could not conjecture. There was but one interpretation to be placed upon his desire to remain concealed and that was that he had hit upon a new field and was working it. We had never heard it stated that opals

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were found in the Colony, but Australia is a land where one is not surprised at any mineral discoveries. On the island were gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, diamonds and in Queensland opals. We resolved to prolong our stay and if possible discover the more fortunate prospector. We made a careful examination of the hills for traces and soon discovered them. On the fourth day we came upon a hut built in a secluded ravine, wherein we found an old man, who gave his name as Burton and stated that he had been in the country for months but had not succeeded in finding any gold. From that time an intimacy sprang up between us but we found the old man extremely reticent relative to his past life. Originally he had resided in Sydney, then in Melbourne, and finally had removed to the west coast. He was exceedingly feeble and ill-fitted to cope with such a life of hardships. From the first he conceived a strong partiality for Vail, who never tired in treating him to delicacies of his own making over the camp fire. We acted on hints given by our new friend, who evidently possessed a good knowledge of mining, but were not rewarded for our perseverance. At the end of two weeks the old man fell ill and we removed him on the mule to our camp where he could be made much more comfortable. Gradually he grew feebler, there was no disease, but a general breaking up of the system which indicated, but too clearly that the end was drawing near. To my surprise he manifested a strong desire to be left alone with Vail in the camp. They spent many hours in whispered conversations which excited my curiosity, but not a word fell from their lips which gave me a clue to the mystery, for mystery there undoubtedly was. One night the old man was very low, when he summoned me to his side and Vail went outside. The old man said "I have made a wonderful discovery, what it is I cannot tell you. It is possible that you may make the same discovery, I cannot understand why you have not made it long since. I want you to promise a dying man that should you make the discovery before you return to Coolgardie that you will conduct yourself as an honorable man and an Englishman."

I gave my promise and an hour later the old man breathed his last. The grief of Vail was so intense and poignant that he was still more mystified, though I knew that he loved the stranger dearly. The grave was dug beneath a flowering gattle and Vail, in a low, sweet voice, broken by sobs, read a chapter from the Testament as the last burial rite. The following day I proposed that we set out on our return trip. "I have a secret," Vail answered, which if you can unravel

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may result in the betterment of our fortunes. The old man strove in vain to solve it and his life paid the forfeit. It was for that he came into this colony and not for gold.

"I have given the old man my word of honor that I will not profit by the discovery if I should make it," I answered.

An embarrassed look spread over my companion's face and and to my surprise his eyes filled with tears.

"Bear in mind," I continued, "If it will benefit you, any thing in my power will be freely done and you can rely upon me to the last."

"I know it, I know it," Vail answered, "fortunately your pledge in no way applies to the subject to which I refer."

"Do not deceive me," I said hotly, for a moment I doubted him, "a man's honor is not to be bartered for gold."

"I pledge you my word," was the answer, "and I value your honor as highly as you do yourself."

I grasped him by the hand and we were friends again. What could it all mean? I was gravitating from mystery to mystery and not a ray of light to guide me. I have the riddle in my pocket, Vail continued, "perhaps you can read it." He drew out a piece of paper yellow with age on which had been traced with a pen some rough outlines. Vail spread the paper out with a careful hand and said, "This is supposed to be a map of this part of the country. The white paper represents the flat or sand country, that is the plain, the small crosses the hills, this circle a marsh, lagoon or pond in the rainy season and the square an island of dry land in the centre of the marsh, the three small dots on the island, three gum trees growing only a few feet from each other and what is to be remembered is that the gum trees all lean toward a common centre. If you can find the island and the gum trees there is every reason to believe that our fortune is made. Years since a convict buried under the gum trees a magnificent band of Queensland opals."

I started and exclaimed, "some of the opal of which you found a small piece."

"Yes."

"And the old man came here to look for it."

"He did."

"And confided the secret to you?"

"Yes."

"We must find it."

"Certainly."

"And begin the search to-morrow."

"I am agreed."

I was consumed with curiosity but did not attempt to pry

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into the mystery as Vail did not volunteer any further information. My experience in the back blocks had taught me that to succeed we must proceed in a methodical manner. I studied the map carefully and concluded from the crosses representing the hills that the marsh could not be inland from the plain more than five miles and that all that was necessary was to go in that distance, using the compass, then move over half a mile at right angles and come out to the plain. This system repeated over and over again would cover the whole area and must in the end prove successful. Vail agreed with my conclusion and that night we went to bed confident that the prize was ours. The following morning we set out, taking the mule with us to carry two days' provisions, and incidentally to to give Vale a lift when he grew weary, for I realized that his strength would soon give out on such a march, though I refrained from mentioning that part of the program to him, for he was exceedingly sensitive on that point. Day after day we toiled over the hills but caught sight of no lagoon. It was the height of the hot season and a great drought was upon the land. I had learned enough of this strange country to know that we were confronted with great difficulties as the rainy season would transform the entire country. Where now were only barren stretches would be great sheets of water or broad and fertile plains covered with waving grass. A week passed and at heart I was utterly discouraged, but Vail never grew despondent. But for him I should have abandoned the quest. His courage never faltered, it was only a question of time and we would succeed. In two weeks nature drove us from the field, every stream and lagoon in the hills dried up and at our camp the water was running very low. I felt that it was dangerous for us to remain any longer and urged the necessity of our departure upon my companion. He pleaded for delay but could furnish no reasons of any weight. To my surprise I found that under his gentleness was a firmness much greater than my own. In those trying days I used the word 'stubborn.' One Sunday Vail reluctantly consented that we should take up our march to the south on the following day. My spirits rose at the prospect, but Vail was depressed and wandered aimlessly along the first range of foot-hills. I was up bright and early making up the packs when Vail went down to the water hole for a supply with which to cook the breakfast. He came back with astonishment written all over his face.

"Come down here," he cried, seizing me by the arm.

I hurried down. Imagine my surprise when I saw oozing from the parched ground, which, owing to the intense heat,



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had cracked in a thousand places, opening to a depth of five or six feet in some spots, the water, clear and sparkling.

"What does it mean?" he asked in a whisper.

"It has rained on the higher ground," I answered.

"Rained! Who ever heard of it raining at this season in West Australia?"

I was compelled to acknowledge that I never had.

"You may as well unpack," Vail said, "there can be no danger on the score of water." I had no answer to this and grumbling I untied the packs and ate my breakfast in moody silence. I could see that Vail was watching me and that while he regretted my disappointment he was equally determined to have his own way. That day we walked up among the hills and found the water bursting out of the ground in numberless places. We knew that it had not rained. The coming of the water was so strange and unaccountable that I was compelled to confess that I was unable to find any reasonable explanation. On the other hand Vail regarded the outflow as an intervention of providence on our behalf. We waited for several days until the low-lying places were filled with water and then began our search again. Not three miles from the camp we came upon a low plain which we had repeatedly crossed in the dry time but never for a moment had we associated it with the hidden opals. Simultaneously we stopped and Vail pointed to the higher ground in the centre, now surrounded by a sheet of water only about a foot deep, but constantly rising. We waded across and in half an hour had located the blue gum trees which answered the description laid down on the map. Then we hurried to the camp and returned with picks and shovels and began digging. The ground was very hard and our progress slow.

Evening was coming on but such was our impatience that we resolved to continue the work. The moon came up and by its dim light we toiled steadily, at last we struck ground that was not so compact, this encouraged us and we sank our pick at that point perpendicular. At the depth of five feet we unearthed a small wooden box, we burst off the cover and in the pale moonlight saw five bands of opal more beautiful than anything we had ever dreamed of. Each band was fully four inches in breadth and about eighteen inches long.

"Hurrah! shouted Vail trembling with excitement.

We started for the camp, crossed the lagoon and entered a thick piece of scrub to take a short cut. I heard not the slightest sound, suddenly something stung me in the calf of the leg, the pain was intense and I cried out, "I have been



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Editor and Proprietor, - PORT HOPE, ONT.

bitten by a snake." I put my hand down and found instead that a small spear was sticking in my leg.

My presence of mind returned instantly and I whispered, "down on the ground, quick and crawl into the bush to the right." I could feel the blood trickling from the wound and hurriedly bound it up with my handkerchief. Vail crouched by my side and was trembling violently. Fortunately our revolvers were in our belts and we drew them and waited and listened. The silence was oppressive and every minute seemed a half hour. All that could be heard was the beating of our hearts.

My loss of blood must have been great for I whispered to Vail, "I am growing faint." He put his arm about me and asked, "Shall we venture it?" "No we are in an ambush and shall be speared if we move." The next instant half a dozen spears sped through the air over our heads and crashed through the brush wood. We flung ourselves prone on the ground and waited, all was silent again. Then I fainted from loss of blood. Ere I lost consciousness I had a faint impression that tears were dropping on my face. When I regained consciousness, I found that another handkerchief had been bound around my leg above the wound and a small stick passed beneath it and then twisted until the handkerchief had been pressed into the flesh, thus stopping the flow of blood and probably saving my life. There we lay hour after hour till at last the welcome dawn came creeping in through the haze. I was too weak to sit up and remembering Vail's fright when the attack was made, gave up all hope. With the daylight our position would become known to the natives and in a few minutes all would be over. When I looked around Vail was no where to be seen. I cursed him for a coward and half struggled to my feet. Then there rang out the sharp report of a revolver followed by shot after shot in rapid succession. The boy was making it exceedingly hot for them, I put my hand to my belt, my revolver was gone; this accounted for the number of shots which had been fired. Then followed a pause and another volley of shots, he had reloaded and reopened the battle. A little later he dashed up the path to my side, a revolver in each hand, and cried "all that are not dead have run away, we must get to the camp." He helped me to my feet, but I could not touch the wounded foot to the ground. Leaning on his shoulder and hobbling forward we at last reached the open, there my strength gave out. Vail propped me up with my back to a boulder and bathed my forehead with some water and gave me a drink.

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"Good luck," he cried, "there is the mule," which we had hobbled and left in the vicinity of the camp. A few minutes later I was on its back and soon reached the tent. It was impossible for me to go forward, but the natives had paid too dearly for their attack to return and undoubtedly left that part of the country for we saw no more of them. Vail explained that when he saw that daylight was coming on he decided that the only way to save our lives was to creep out and make a rear attack upon the savages, thus creating the impression that they had been attacked by a rescuing party. The ruse had proved successful and resulted in the death of three natives and the wounding of several others. Beyond a doubt I owe my life to the skill and forethought of my companion. The wound in my leg healed slowly and was exceedingly painful, two weeks passed before I was able to set out for Coolgardie, which we reached without further incident. From Coolgardie we journeyed to Perth. At the capital we met a French expert who paid us four thousand pounds for the box of opals, which I have since learned was much less than the market value of the gems. The money was equally divided and I was preparing to return to England when Vail made a request which I felt I could not refuse, it was that I should remain in Perth for one month during his absence, he would meet me at the Imperial hotel, on the first day of the following month at eight p.m. I opined that the request was connected with the promise which I had given to the old man at the camp and anxiously awaited the denouement. So anxious was I that there should be no delay that I took up my residence at the hotel a week previous to the termination of the time. The last day I carefully scrutinized all new comers, but saw nothing of my friend. When eight struck I abandoned all hope and grew anxious lest some accident had befallen him. On the stroke of the clock a bell boy came down the stairs and informed me that a lady wished to see me in private parlor "A." So far as I was aware I was not acquainted with a lady in Australia and I concluded that a mistake had been made. The parlor was dimly lighted, when I entered a young lady advanced from the window and said, "Mr. Detmold, I believe."

I answered in the affirmative.

"Be seated, please."

The voice was exceedingly sweet and musical and awakened memories, but in vain did I attempt to recall when or where I had heard it. There could be no doubt but that

England was the place and I awaited impatiently a clue to the explanation.

"I have learned," the lady continued, "that you made a trip into the interior with a very dear friend of mine, George Vail, and that you both returned to Perth, where a handsome sum was received for the sale of a large package of opals. You will pardon me for my frankness but I am deeply interested in Mr. Vail." I heard an audible sigh and mentally registered the conviction that Vail was a deuced lucky fellow, for the woman was exceedingly attractive if not beautiful, and so far as I could see possessed a figure of exquisite proportions.

"Your statement in reference to Vail and myself is true," I answered, "and any information which I possess will be freely furnished."

"Thanks, will you kindly furnish me with Mr. Vail's address?"

"Unfortunately I am unable to do so. He left me in Perth one month ago to day and was to meet me at this hotel at eight o'clock this evening, in fact I was waiting for him when I received the message from you."

"A remarkable coincidence," she murmured, with a perceptible shade of doubt in the tone which irritated me.

"Another question, where did Mr. Vail go to from Perth?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

"He mentioned no place, merely stated that he would meet you in one month?"

"Yes."

"Who beside Mr. Vail and the purchaser was cognizant of the fact that you had sold the opals and received a handsome sum for them?"

"No person, the purchaser requested that no mention should be made of the transaction, alleging that if it became known that such a large quantity of opals had been thrown on the market it would depreciate the value of the gems."

"What became of the purchaser, may I ask?"

"He left the following day for Albany and informed me that it was his intention to proceed to Sydney and take the first Messageries steamer for France."

"Then it follows that you were the only person remaining in the colony who was aware that Vail had been paid a large sum of money?"

"The only person."

"May I ask what was the sum?"

"Two thousand pounds."

"And you received?"

"An equal amount."

"One more inquiry and I have finished. I have never heard that opals were found in West Australia. Did you discover an opal mine?"

For the first time I hesitated, I could feel that I was being closely watched by my fair questioner and an uneasy feeling crept over me. Was I free to explain the circumstances under which the opals came into our possession? I was well aware of the old superstition that opals were unlucky and it was possible that our gems possessed this peculiarity.

"You have not answered my question Mr. Detmold."

"No, I was considering; the opals came into our hands in a very remarkable manner and I do not know whether I should be justified in divulging the facts without Vail's consent, as it was through him that they were discovered."

"I may be frank with you, Mr. Detmold, and thus remove your doubts. From my infancy I have been the constant companion of Mr. Vail, he is my dearest friend and I feel a deeper interest in him than in any other person. I am convinced that were George present he would, under the circumstances, ask you to speak unreservedly."

What more could a lady say? She referred to him as George, quite unconsciously, there could no longer be any doubt as to their relations and as I glanced at her I forgot my momentary irritation and envied the lucky fellow. Then I told her the story of the finding of the box, of Vail's tact and bravery, and my admiration for the man. As I proceeded her face flushed and a new light came into her eyes. She paused a little time to recover her composure and then said:

"What you have told me is very wonderful. Have you the map of the ground where the opals were found?"

"No, Vail took it with him."

"All of your statements have been direct but unfortunately, for you there is not the slightest evidence to corroborate them."

"No, only my word."

"Permit me to point out the facts," she continued. You go into the interior with Mr. Vail, you find four thousand pounds worth of opals under very peculiar circumstances, you return and dispose of them and on the day the sale is made Vail disappears and since that day he has not been seen or heard from. I may tell you that it is known that he did not leave Perth by any of the coast steamers, he did not proceed to Albany and take passage on one of the European steamers which call at that port, there is no trace of his having gone to Coolgardie or to any other point in the interior.

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What has become of him?"

"I would give my share of the money gladly to know," I answered, now thoroughly alarmed.

"If I am compelled to apply to the police they will undoubtedly ask your assistance."

Then it dawned upon me that in stating the facts I had woven a net of suspicion around myself. Could it be possible that I was already in the hands of a female detective? My blood ran cold. But a few weeks previous, Deeming, the murderer, had been arrested in the interior and taken to Melbourne, public feeling ran high in the colony and Justice ran a swift race.

Conscious of my innocence my courage rose and rising I said, "My advice is that you at once report the matter to the police."

"And my advice is," said the lady also rising, "that you Henry Detmold, are a great goose."

I stared in amazement. What could it all mean.

"It may be so," I answered stiffly.

"You came here to meet George Vail?"

"I most certainly did."

"And you don't know him when you see him?"

Was my brain failing? I advanced to my persecutor and instantly it flashed upon me. I threw my arms around the girl and carried her up to the light, there was no mistake, it was George Vail, he struggled to get free but I held him fast.

"You humbug," I cried, "Even now when I know you, you look pretty enough to kiss."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes," and remembering that he had kissed me when I lay in a half faint, I stooped down and kissed him on the cheek blushing as I did so, but George's blushes were carnation compared with mine, and I set him down on his feet.

"What a stupid," he said.

"I quite agree with you."

"And you don't understand yet?"

"Understand what?"

"That—that I am a girl."

"A girl!"

"Yes."

"And always have been,?" I blundered out in my blunt way.

The only answer was a merry, ringing laugh. "Yes and ways have been."

"Then I am doubly glad I kissed you."

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"You held me."

"No matter. Tell me, I am dying of impatience."

"You made a promise to the old man, did you not?"

"Yes, and I think I understand. He must have known the secret. How did he discover it?"

"He knew immediately and accused me and I confessed."

"And I was a stupid."

"You did not find me out."

"Who are you?"

"Helen Vail."

"I am glad that I have only lost one half of my old partner, you are at least Vail."

Then Helen told me her story. Her father had been an English half-pay officer, who on his retirement from the army had emigrated to Sydney in the hope of bettering his condition. His wife having died the first year after his removal to the colony, his health had failed, and as Helen was the only child her life had been devoted to his care. They had no surviving relatives, so far as she was aware and when her father died a few months previous to my meeting her at Coolgardie, his sudden death had thrown her penniless on the world, as his pension ceased with his life. After the small debts and the funeral expenses had been paid there only remained some fifty pounds with which to face the world. She had proceeded to Melbourne and in vain attempted to secure employment as a governess, but her youth and inexperience had proved an insuperable stumbling block and as a final resort she had resolved to go to the gold fields of West Australia and to facilitate her project and chances of success she had donned a man's dress and made her way to Coolgardie. Her timidity and the roughness of the miners had prevented her from engaging in any enterprise and but for my arrival and friendship she would have been compelled to acknowledge her sex and obtain menial employment.

When she had concluded I said, "The natives found you an excellent shot, even if you are a girl."

"Yes, my poor father taught me the use of the revolver when I was a little girl and that gave me confidence and taught me the tactics, for I had frequently heard him give his experience of adventures among the hill tribes in India, where he was stationed for many years."

After we came to Perth, why did you retire for a month and why did you lead me through such a maze before you made yourself known?"

"I had to secure a wardrobe and to remove the tan from

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my face and then I wished to ascertain whether you would recognize me in my new apparel."

"Where did you hide?"

"I went to the Convent and the good sisters took me in and were very kind to me, though the Lady Superioress read me many lectures on the enormity of my sin and extracted from me a solemn promise that I would never again commit the offence."

"There is one more mystery which I should like to have cleared up. It is, how did the old man become possessed of the secret that a box of opals had been buried on the island in the lagoon?"

"For many, many years he was a squatter in Queensland, so long ago that the penal system was in vogue in that and the other colonies. He had on his station at one time a ticket-of-leave man, by the name of Vigor, whom he treated very kindly. Vigor had been transported for forgery and was intelligent and had been educated as a mining engineer. He was a lifer and the one object of his life was to return to England, where he had a wife and family. The old man won his gratitude by attempting to secure a pardon for him from the authorities at Sydney, but his efforts were fruitless. Vigor, who acted as a shepherd on the run, found the opals mine but kept the secret to himself. He dug out the opals found by us and made his escape to Sydney where he hoped to obtain passage to England but failed. He was finally captured and sent to Norfolk Island from which place he was transferred to West Australia. The opals he had buried in Sydney. On his return to Sydney he dug them up and carried them with him to the west coast. At Perth, a ticket of leave man he went into the service of a squatter. He wrote a letter to his old master in Queensland telling him that he possessed the treasure and that if he did not succeed in getting away from the colony he would bequeath it to him on his death, sending at the same time the sample which I found. Vigor kept an accurate account of the journey into the interior in search of pasture and made a map of the route as well as of the spot where he ultimately buried the opals. Vigor and his companions made the way to the coast but he was so enfeebled in consequence of the hardships he had undergone that he died in a few months after his return. Previous to his death he sent his old employer the map by which we located the treasure. The old man had no faith that he would be able to find the opals and years passed by. The great drought in Queensland ruined him and as a last resort he came to Perth."

and set out on his search, encouraged by the fact that the gold miners were pouring into the interior. You know the rest and his unfortunate death at our camp. When he ascertained that I was a girl and had heard my story his heart went out to me and he gave me the treasure, provided I could find it."

"And you divided it with me."

"That was only fair."

"Yes, if you had been a man, but as you are not you must take take my part less the few pounds which I have spent."

"Never," exclaimed Helen the tears coming to her eyes.

I had loved Vail as a boy, as a girl I worshipped my old partner and the result was that within one week we were married and are now on our way to the Illawarra district where I purpose buying a small station and settling down for life. Some time in the future my partner and I will go to Queensland and on the run of the old man, which is on the Barcoo, attempt to locate the original opal mine."

Eighteen months later I was not surprised when I read in the Sydney Morning Herald that a very rich deposit of opals had been discovered on the Barcoo by a man named Petmold.

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A TALE OF SOUTH AFRICA.

I was one of the first prospectors in the Transval to search for gold and a precious dance it lead me. At that time but few Englishmen had ventured into the Boer country and such was the jealousy with which they were regarded that it was impossible to secure any information which would assist in the search. Footsore and weary I tramped from farm to farm, content to obtain a supper of mealies and the toughest of tough South African mutton. There were rumors on every hand that gold existed but to locate it was quite another matter. It has since transpired that in my wanderings I passed over some of the richest gold bearing deposits in the world but so unlike the gold bearing fields of California and Australia is the Rand that the most experienced miner would never have dreamed of the richness of the claims. I was not searching for quartz but the poor man's field, placer mines. To add to my perplexities my money ran short and I could only replenish my purse at Cape Town. I sank so low that I was compelled to sell my horse and from that hour I was on a level with a Kaffir in the estimation of the Boers. The white man who approaches a farmhouse in the Transval on foot must be prepared for abject humiliation. Fortunately I had acquired some knowledge of sheep in Australia else I believe that I should have starved. When all else failed I became a sheep doctor and vended a compound whose virtues would have done credit to the most widely advertised patent medicine nostrum.

One long to be remembered evening I arrived at a Boer's house situated twenty miles from any other habitation. When I asked for supper and a night's lodging the door was slammed in my face and in the worst of German I was ordered to begone. Physically I was incapable of complying with the command and mentally I had not the slightest intention of departing. In an outhouse, devoted to storing mealies, sheep skins and harness, an old man was sitting on the doorstep compounding a mixture, which I recognized as a sheep remedy. I approached him and gave him to understand that

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I was possessed of a remedy which would work wonders in such cases. He was all attention instantly and the result was that in a few minutes an excellent meal was spread in the house, to which I was invited. Then I proceeded to mix a number of simples, which the man possessed, and finally I poured into the simmering mass, with the greatest care and ostentation, a few grains of boracic acid, which I fortunately possessed.

The following day I was the most surprised man in South Africa when I learned that my preparation was working a marvellous cure. I was invited to remain with the Boer the balance of the season as an honored guest. Day after day I tramped the hills, returning at night as wise and as rich as when I set out. There were unmistakable indications that gold should be found in the vicinity but the stubborn fact remained that I could not find it. I had given up all hopes and only remained to recruit my strength previous to setting out on my long journey to the coast when the following remarkable circumstances transpired.

I slept in a great four poster bed of proportions ample for a race of giants, and as I was deposited between two feather ticks in the old German fashion, the weather being the reverse of cold, my dreams were not the most pleasant and my rest not untroubled. But for offending the good housewife I would have asked for a sheepskin on the floor.

One sultry night, after a long day's walk, I found myself tossing and restless and unable to get even a forty wink nap. For hours I thus lay lamenting my fate and regretting having abandoned the land of the Golden Fleece for the land of King Solomon's mines. At a late hour I fell into a disturbed sleep. I awoke with a start and listened attentively. All was quiet in the house and yet I felt certain that some one was preparing to leave the place. How long this impression remained I am unable to say. I am by no means certain that I again fell asleep, and yet I am compelled by that which followed to acknowledge that it is probable that such was the fact. Whether dreaming or waking, I saw a venerable old man, dressed as a German peasant, walk quietly out of the front door, cast a suspicious glance around, as if to ascertain whether he had been observed and then slip out into the darkness, where he disappeared,

So realistic was the scene that the following morning I inquired whether a friend of the family had paid them a visit after I had retired.

The answer was, "No."

Two nights later I saw precisely the same thing happen

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again but as on the former occasion I could not decide whether I had been dreaming or not. The appearance of the venerable old man was indelibly stamped upon my brain. I saw distinctly that he was very old, that his beard was as white as a lamb's fleece and that he was dressed in an antiquated garb, seen only in the most secluded parts of Germany, in which country I had spent several months attending a school in my boyhood days. The next night I determined to remain awake but was not successful and again I saw the old man depart. His constant re-appearance had at last a powerful effect upon me. I decided that the next time, whether asleep or awake, I would follow him. With this resolve upon my mind I retired the next night and soon fell into a heavy sleep, due, no doubt, to my former wakefulness. Once more I awoke, or imagined that I awoke, with the well-defined conviction that some person was preparing to leave the house. Cautiously I crept out of bed and as the old man left by the front door I slipped out by a side entrance. I remember distinctly saying to myself: "This is certainly not a dream; there is the man walking slowly over the veldt and here I am watching and ready to follow where he may lead."

Follow him I did. My strange guide never once looked behind him after he had left the house but proceeded directly to the hills, which ran along the north of the farm and were distant some two miles. He gradually quickened his pace and finally I was compelled to run to keep him in sight. After he entered the hills he turned and doubled on his track in the most provoking manner and frequently I not only lost sight of him but barely escaped meeting him face to face, so sudden were his turns and so unexpected his reappearances. Why I was following him I could not tell. In fact I was possessed of but a single impulse and that was to follow. The old man never halted or hesitated but finally entered a narrow valley, at the end of which rose a precipitous cliff. At that point he suddenly disappeared. When I reached the spot I found that beneath an overhanging rock an excavation had been made at some time in the past, as there were no signs of recent work. The pit was thickly strewn with fallen leaves, and as it was but a few feet in depth, I let myself down into it in the hope of discovering some passage by which the old man had disappeared. My foot struck something which was evidently metal. It proved to be an antiquated shovel with a short handle. The night was a bright one and at the time the moonbeams streamed directly into the place. I could discover no means of retreat save by the way I had entered and it was impossible for my strange

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guide to have returned by that route and passed me unnoticed, unless he possessed the power of rendering himself invisible. To probe the matter to the bottom I commenced digging. The ground was exceedingly hard and my progress correspondingly slow. I threw out several shovels of earth and then climbed up the bank and examined it. I came upon a nugget, worth at least five pounds, then another and another, but all smaller than the first. All of my mining instincts were aroused and I forgot the strange circumstances under which I had been led to the mine. Again I entered the pit and set to work with all my energy and again I was handsomely rewarded. The fever of greed seized upon me and I worked as if my life depended on the result. The seventh time I began digging but the first thrust of the shovel brought it in contact with some hard substance. I stooped down and found that I had uncovered the complete skeleton of a man. An indistinguishable terror seized upon me. I had been mining in a grave. I am not superstitious but for the first I clearly realized the uncanny circumstances which surrounded my discovery. I imagined that I heard vague whisperings in the air and that a rumbling sound came swelling up the valley. I lost my presence of mind, threw down the shovel and ran for my life. I would have sworn that a legion of nameless fiends were at my very heels, so insane was my fright. When I emerged from the hills the moon was shining calmly and the sense of peace and repose brought me to my senses. I walked rapidly to the farmhouse, which was in sight, crept in and without undressing threw myself on the bed. I was soon asleep nor did I awake until the housewife called me to breakfast.

When I discovered that I was dressed I was amazed. I remembered distinctly going to bed the previous evening but had no recollection of having got up during the night, until by chance I put my hand in my pocket and drew out one of the nuggets. Then it all came back to me with a vividness which was startling in its intensity. There could be no doubt of the mine for the gold in my pockets was worth fully one hundred and fifty pounds.

I resolved that I would keep my discovery a secret and continue to work the mine which had yielded such handsome results in a single night. Then I repaired to the hills and began my search. Half an hour convinced me that I retain not the slightest clew as to the location of the mine. Day after day I continued the search but in vain. No trace of the valley could I discover and finally I was compelled to admit that a doubt existed in my mind as to whether the

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Shoes.** 



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gold had been found by me or had been placed in my pocket by some kind fairy.

To have found and lost such an exceedingly rich deposit was exasperating in itself but the uncertainty which enshrouded the whole business made me doubt my own sanity.

One evening as I was sitting in the house brooding over the problem the Boer's wife opened a great clothes' press, removed several articles of wearing apparel and laid them on the floor. My attention was immediately attracted to an old coat.

"Who owns the suit of clothes?" I inquired.

"They belonged to grandfather," was the answer.

"Is he dead?" I queried.

"Dead more than twenty years, in fact before I was married and came to live here, for he was my husband's father."

"Did you know him?"

"Yes, but I was only a little girl at the time."

"Why have the clothes been kept?"

"Before he died he gave orders that they were not to be used and his wishes have been respected. My husband has told me that he was a man of many peculiarities and as it was due to him that we have the farm we cherish his name and respect his wishes."

"What were his peculiarities?"

"One was that he paid several visits to the Cape and when he returned he always brought with him a bag of money, but to the day of his death even his son, my husband, did not know how he came to have it. With this money he bought land and cattle and sheep and thus became rich.

Had he lived he would have been the richest Boer in this part of the country. Then his death was a mystery and a mystery which has never been cleared up. He had grown to be old and feeble and he did no more work, but nothing could keep him out of the hills. If anyone followed him he flew into a great passion and cursed him roundly. My husband feared that some accident would befall him in his wanderings and the fear was at last realized. These clothes were his best and he prized them very much, for he said that they had brought him 'good luck.' It was for that reason he wanted them kept, no doubt. One day he went away to the hills and he never came back. The whole country joined in the search but no trace was ever found. He was not able to walk a long way and could not have wandered any distance and that was what made his disappearance the more strange. Some were of the opinion that he was carried off

by the Kaffirs, some that he had been murdered, for it was well known that he always had gold in his pocket. What ever befel him no one knows."

I took up the coat and hat and could have sworn that the man I had followed to the hills was dressed in precisely the same garments. Could it be possible that after all these years I had found his grave? Had it been his ghost which I had seen night after night issuing from the house and making its way to the lonely grave in the hills? Had his wealth been derived from the sale of the gold which he had dug out of the pit? Admitting these facts, why had I been chosen to solve the mystery? Was it possible that a sympathy existed between the dead and gone Boer miner and the needy prospector, myself? These questions I was unable to answer. My common sense revolted at such conclusions and yet, argue as I would, the gold was in my pocket to prove their truth.

There remained another explanation, it was that I had not been awake during the periods in which I saw the old man. I had developed into a somnambulist and had got up in the night, imagining that I was following an old man and while in that state picked up the gold found in my pocket in the morning. Unfortunatety this theory did not account for the previous existence of my ghostly guide. I realized the uselessness of attempting to explain to my Boer friends the peculiar circumstances of the case and in consequence kept silent. From that hour I abandoned my search for a mine, which was alike a mine and a grave, the location being only known to ghosts or somnambulists.

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